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THE CHANGING ORDER

By the same Author

THE SYMBOLIC ISLAND
ENGLAND AT THE FLOOD-TIDE
THE SUN-WORSHIPPER

Etc. etc.

THE CHANGING ORDER

How a *New Parson* Came to the *Village*
and Disquieted it with *Strange Practices*,
and how the Meaning of *Anglo-*
Catholicism was Expounded
to the *Squire*

BY
KENNETH INGRAM

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CHAPTER I

THE SETTING OF THE INQUIRY

I

DAVID LYALL will be best identified in our minds as one of that vast generation who graduated at the University of the Great War.

He had finished his first term at Oxford when war broke out. He rushed, almost instinctively, to arms, not because he loved soldiering, but because all his friends were going. He did not get out to France till the end of '15. He was launched on the Somme, and, not being killed, was inevitably wounded and slightly gassed. This kept him in England for most of '17. But he was back again in time for the German offensive, was caught up in the retreating Second Army at Armentières, narrowly escaped capture at Bailleul, rested through the pleasant summer of '18 at Borre, advanced *via* Merris back to Bailleul, and

eventually joined in the wild chase of the last few weeks through Perenchies, Lille, Tourcoing, and innumerable Belgian villages. He went on awhile to Germany and spent '19 in the curious existence of that half-amicable, half-hostile environment, of military duties and civilian pleasures, gunnery and opera. Finally he returned to his native hearth in the February of 1920.

He came back chiefly because his father had died and his mother and sister were alone. He came back to take over the reins of office as squire in the pleasant little Berkshire village where his father and grandfather and great-grandfather had reigned before him. At one time he had thought he could never tolerate the monotony of a country gentleman's life, nor suffer the calm domesticity of the Manor House and the small estate, the farm and the thousand little duties which had been his father's sole interest. But, oddly enough, he found that the moment he returned, it all became very absorbing and attractive. His old desires to take up and complete his Oxford career, to go into some profession, or to seek a pioneer occupation in the Colonies—in fact,

to break away from the even ancestral path which was otherwise mapped out for him—vanished in an instant. He was intensely glad to settle down.

It is important for our purpose, I think, to get quite clear why he was glad.

There was, of course, the sense of responsibility which appealed to him. His mother was growing old and his sister, any day, might marry and leave them. And the home was by no means that easy adjunct of a restful life which it had been during most of his father's career. Serious financial difficulties, due to heavy taxation and the cost of living, had begun to appear. A changed spirit was evident among the farm-hands, and even the domestic servants. The administration of the little estate was going to be a distinctly difficult and delicate business, if the storm was to be weathered at all. And this appealed to, and began to absorb, his energies. There was certainly more than enough to do and to think about. His mother could not manage it alone. David was wanted, and he was glad that he was wanted. That was one reason why he was not sorry to bury some of his wilder

ambitions and to settle down to country life. But there was another reason also.

And that reason we must carefully examine, because otherwise we shall be strangers to David.

II

The other reason was simply that David himself had changed.

Like most of the men who had been out in the war, he did not know that he had changed. He was perfectly fit and strong again, his wound had healed, and there were only occasional reminiscences of the gas trouble when he caught a cold and found it difficult to breathe at night. His sympathy for old pre-war interests had revived. He wanted entirely to forget the war. But, nevertheless, he had changed. Really this desire to steep himself in his landlord duties was an indication that his mind had been tired out. He did not feel consciously tired. But there was a queer conservatism, a maturity of outlook, a tendency to regard with distrust all new developments and evidences of change, which most men do

not begin to feel until they are forty. Mentally he had aged. He had seen life—the vortex of life—and tremendous adventures and responsibilities had swept down on him in the small space of those four incredible years. He had had to make decisions, at a moment's notice, which involved the lives of hundreds of men. He had known hunger and cold and discomfort and the strain of incessant peril. His wits had been sharpened, and he had rapidly developed, not in the more intellectual direction which Oxford might have encouraged, but in the acquisition of those practical capacities which a man needs, if he is to be efficient in taking over responsibilities and problems. He had matured and he was tired, for he had seen the horrors of a convulsion of the world-order. He would have disowned the name of "pacifist," but he was determined that such a chaos should never happen again.

And that is why he had come to love the English countryside and to distrust the symptoms of change. He loved the sloping meadows, the thatched cottages, the deep woodland, and the stretch of Berkshire hills,

because they spoke to him of rest and permanence and stability. He had come home more than ever attuned to England and all things English. And he found himself viewing, almost with a middle-aged intolerance, new customs and ideas which came whispering in at the open windows. He feared these vague Socialist theories as liable to upset the calm of the English system, which was, he felt, the only sanctuary from the unspeakable things which for four years had been let loose. He distrusted the growing freedom of women—he was not sure that he really liked to see his sister smoking innumerable cigarettes. Into those four years had been telescoped the influence of twenty.

And sometimes, only very rarely, because they were buried far beneath the surface of consciousness, there were queer volcanic elements, violent twinges of anger and irritations very unlike his normal self and his happy good-humour. These were the only remnants of the agony of those forgotten days, the wrenching of tortured nerves, the terror and the strain of experiences which cannot be named. We need not dwell on them, because

they have nothing to do with the David whom we shall meet. It is necessary only to remember that they are there.

III

So there is David, bronzed, happy, and very busy, and entirely part of the home, the village and the fresh soil which bred him and his forebears. We see him first in his native setting on the terrace in the cool September sunlight, on the terrace from which the lawn slopes gently down to the kitchen garden and the stables, and on to the hedge which divides the estate from the meadows where the cattle graze. And there you can see the further descent of the fields to the little village, the tower of the village church, and the chimneys of the village peeping out behind the trees. Presently the ground rises again to the dense woodland of the Headingley estate, and on and on into the misty distance, where dimly you can see the plain chalk downs wending their way towards the Wiltshire border. It is England. And, further, though we cannot

see it from the terrace, is the great world, with the cities, the seas, the rivers and the plains, so that the village is not an isolated unit, but is an inseparable fragment of the unbounded human empire.

CHAPTER II

THE VILLAGE CHURCH IS DISTURBED

I

I SUPPOSE that if you had asked David a few years before to name the quarter from which, of all quarters, problems, anxieties and annoyances would be least likely to arise in his life, he would have answered, "Religion."

For religion was an incident about which he felt himself to be perfectly normal and sane, and about which his father and mother, and most of the people whom he had met intimately, had been perfectly sane. It was one of those things which had not given him five minutes' worry, and had never been more than a rather picturesque background which had the good taste not to obtrude itself too distinctively into his concerns. David had just escaped that generation which sat under the discipline of a very Puritan Victorianism. He had never had to endure the strict Sabbaths and the long

services to which his father, as a boy, had been subject. The village church had rather attractive memories, so far as it had any definite associations. The parson was a sensible, sporting sort of fellow, who did his job well, preached short sermons, and saw that Morning Prayer was over by twelve of a Sunday. They never went to church in the evening. David had no particular inclination for religion, but he respected this Sunday morning routine with the procession up to the Manor House pew and the courtly deference which met the Squire's family from people and parson alike—not an overdone deference, but a sensible, friendly, dignified attitude. . . .

It was a little dull sometimes, especially on Litany Sundays, and David always preferred the Communion days, when they came out after the Church Militant prayer—only his mother and sister staying behind for the Celebration. But his father had been entirely wise about it and had never compelled him to go to church. Then there had been Chapel at Winchester, which, on the whole, he had rather enjoyed. He could remember one or two quite stirring sermons, and there were favourite

hymns, and, for a short while until his voice broke, there had been the added interest of singing in the choir. Oxford had been too suddenly interrupted to make much contribution to this general religious impression. David had only begun to be conscious of a new dignity of the Church as set in this world of spacious chapels, of splendid traditions and famous personalities. Finally, there had been the War, and here, too, religion had made so occasional and slight an entry that it had retained its tolerable proportions. Compulsory church parades might have been a tiresome part of the training routine at home had it not been for the fact that he was an officer and had to march his men to church, and that, so far as this was concerned, they were all in the same boat. In France there had been the spasmodic appearances of some excellent, and some rather tedious padres. But the short services of prayer, sermon and hearty hymns had been too much of a relief from the mud and blood of Flanders to be other than welcome.

David had, therefore, no particular complex about religion. He had no prejudices one way or the other, and it had never occurred to him

that such an element could ever be the cause of anxieties or responsibilities. On the contrary, religion seemed to fit evenly and exactly into the order of English life. David made up his mind always to attend the 11.0 service on Sundays, as his father had done before him, and to read the lessons, as his father had also done. He would back up the parson in his work according to the same traditions, subscribing, as far as diminished financial resources would allow, to the parish funds, throwing open the grounds of the Manor to the annual Sunday School treat, and having the parson and his wife regularly to dinner. He would of course be Churchwarden, and old Mr. Strutton would be his fellow. It would be the least of all his duties, for beyond the hour on Sundays, the occasional parish business on which the Vicar would wish to consult him, and the charitable contributions, nothing else was required. Once a month he would go with his mother and sister to Communion, because, in a vague way, he felt that this was only playing the game with the Church and with his own position. And it was right to play the game, because the old Church of

England—though parsons and services and sermons could become rather dreary and remote from life—stood essentially for the order which he wished to see preserved. The Church was a barrier against Bolshevism, upheaval and revolution. All these wild revolutionaries were atheists, and the Dissenters, in the past, had been implicated with Radical agitations. The Church of England deserved to be supported. She asked for so little and she stood for so much. The padre would find that David never let him down.

II

But the fates have a reputation for appreciating irony, and it was in this peaceful backwater of religion, of all places, that the storm arose. It happened in this way.

Just before David was "demobbed," the old padre died. He had been Vicar for twenty-five years and had become really a friend of the family. Everyone mourned his loss. It became necessary to appoint a successor. And eventually David's mother secured someone, whom a friend recommended,

and who had worked in the slums of East London and needed country air.

Then the troubles began.

They did not begin at once, for there was a considerable interval taken up with Mr. Stanson's arriving and finding his feet, so to speak. But, from the first, both David and his mother were not predisposed in his favour. Mr. Stanson was unmarried, and was untidy in his habits. He was lean and uncomfortable in appearance. He was obviously awkward and nervous in society, although David went out of his way to put him at his ease. He had evidently no rural interests and preferred his books to his garden. But, still, no doubt he would acclimatize. At present he gave no indications of the troubles for which he was ultimately to become responsible.

But, gradually, annoying little indications began to manifest themselves as to his High Church proclivities. David had noticed that he crossed himself at certain periods of the service, and he gathered from a few conversational episodes that he was not satisfied with many of the existing arrangements. One first Sunday in the month David and his mother

—his sister was staying in town—went to Communion at eight. David noticed that two candles were alight on the altar, which had never been the custom during the late Vicar's incumbency. It did not matter, but David felt a slight annoyance that this should have been done without his permission having been asked, or at least some sort of consultation invited. But that was not all. There were other things, quite trifling things, which David could hardly have analysed or described. He was only vaguely conscious that changes had been made, and that there was somehow a different spirit in the service. Mr. Stanson wore some sort of queer vestment—why on earth he could not have been content with the plain white surplice of his predecessor David did not know. He did not turn to the people as frequently as David seemed to remember used to be the custom, and he appeared to speak less distinctly and audibly than usual. There was also a small village boy who was in attendance, but whose presence seemed to be quite unnecessary. David was chiefly annoyed that these ritual details had the power to annoy him. They were all so trifling and incon-

sequential. And yet they had somehow the effect of inducing in him an odd feeling of uneasiness.

He found that his mother was also vaguely disturbed.

But this was only the beginning of the troubles. Mr. Stanson began to make more and more alterations. It was never certain, from week to week, what changes he would make next. A crucifix was placed in front of the pulpit, and a second crucifix was substituted for the plain brass cross which had hitherto adorned the altar. Every Sunday at ten there was now instituted a Choral Celebration, which Mr. Stanson exhorted people to attend instead of Morning Prayer at eleven. This was all very well, but David and his mother became increasingly aware that the Vicar was less deferential to the second service than when it had had the sole monopoly. There was a suggestion that he hurried through it. The organist, whom he had brought with him from London, was understood to be urging the choir to perform at ten, while boys only were to sing at eleven. On several Sundays Mr. Stanson did not preach a sermon

at eleven, and, though David was secretly glad to escape a sermon, he was immensely annoyed at the slight which he felt that the absence of a sermon implied to his mother and himself. And on one occasion they were kept waiting because the ten o'clock service was not over. David and his mother entered and took their places in the family pew and became conscious of strange vanishing sights, of disappearing server-boys, the fleeting impression of a queer-coloured vestment, a lingering waft of incense, the flicker of rapidly-extinguished candles. It was all very strange and seemed rather silly. But nothing had been more annoying than the delay in commencing the ordinary morning service.

III

David put all these questions as far as possible out of his mind, and rather discouraged his mother when she wanted to talk about them. "If Stanson wants to be High Church," he said, "he can be, for all I care. Of course, if he goes too far, in my position I shall have to interfere. But it doesn't

interest me in the least." Nevertheless, David's real reason for this attitude of dignified neutrality was a certain resentment that he had not been consulted. He determined to stand entirely aloof and not in any way to suggest that he wished to be consulted.

Yet, once again, his calculations were upset by the fates.

A crisis arose which made it impossible for him to remain neutral. It was his mother who brought the news to him just as he was getting ready to go down to the stables to saddle the mare and ride across to Tharrowdown. "There's more trouble about the new Vicar," she said ; " I think you ought to know."

" Oh, damn the Vicar," David cried. " I haven't any time for him now. What's the matter ? That fellow can't leave things alone."

His mother commenced to explain that Tom Thanner, who was being prepared by the Vicar for Confirmation, and who, moreover, was the son of the head gardener, was being forced to go to Confession. There had been a row at home about it. Mrs. Thanner, the boy's mother, had been reduced to hysterics. The father had talked about it to the servants,

and the parlour-maid had reported it to her mistress. Mrs. Lyall, already aggrieved, was smarting under the sense of outrage.

"Well, it's nothing to do with me," said David.

"I think you ought to interfere, David," his mother answered. "We have a certain responsibility, seeing that it's Thanner's boy."

David was impatient to mount his mare. "What does it mean?" he asked. "Is Stanson insisting on the boy confessing his sins to him? What do the other children do?"

"They are all being told they must go," said Mrs. Lyall. "It's disgraceful. It's sheer priestcraft."

"I suppose I must see the fellow about it," remarked David. "It's all an infernal nuisance. Why can't the children be left alone? You had better arrange to ask him to dinner. Any night next week will do. No, not Thursday. I shall be up in town on Thursday, and I shan't be back till late."

"David," said his mother, "I don't think it's quite an occasion to ask him to dinner. We—well, it might almost seem to countenance his action."

"Very well," David answered, making off down the stable path, "ask him to lunch—or breakfast, or tea—or anything you like. Only don't worry. I'll soon stop any nonsense."

Mrs. Lyall returned to the house feeling that she had not altogether failed in her duty. And David rode to Tharrowdown.

IV

In the end, as the gossip in the village grew more acute, David decided that it would be a more sportsmanlike thing to beard the enemy in his own den. So one afternoon he called at the Vicarage.

Mr. Stanson kept him waiting, and David had time to look around. The study, which in the late Vicar's time had been kept tidy and clean, seemed full of rank tobacco smoke, and bore all the signs of bachelor disorder. There was a large image of the Virgin Mary on the mantelshelf, and several other religious ornaments, besides a number of novels, innumerable letters, and photographs. David was not impressed. Presently Mr. Stanson entered.

"I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting," he began in that odd, nervous way of his. "Will you have a cigarette?" He produced a packet of Gold Flakes.

"No thanks," said David, who abhorred cheap Virginias.

"Do sit down," urged the Vicar.

David sat down. "I felt that I ought to call," he remarked, "because——"

"It's very good of you, I'm sure," said the Vicar. "I have been so very busy, or I should have called on your mother some time ago."

"I felt that I ought to call," David continued, "because of this trouble about Tom Thanner and the other children. I understand you insist on their going to Confession?"

"I haven't insisted," said Mr. Stanson. "I only strongly encouraged them to do so."

David hesitated. "I was told you insisted," he remarked.

"Yes," said Mr. Stanson, "that's the worst of village gossip. People exaggerate so."

David now felt that he definitely disliked Mr. Stanson. The remark implied a criticism of his own mother, though of course Stanson

couldn't know that it was Mrs. Lyall who had repeated the story. Anyhow, he felt impelled to become more aggressive. "I don't quite see what right you have to encourage them to confess," he remarked, "especially if it's against their parents' will."

"I expressly told them not to come against their parents' will," said Mr. Stanson.

"Well, then, I don't quite see your right to encourage them under any circumstances."

"I should have thought," said Mr. Stanson, "that it was the right, and indeed the duty, of a parish priest."

"Good Lord! You'll be saying it's my duty to go to Confession next."

"I certainly do," said Mr. Stanson.

David leaned back in his chair. The conversation was taking an unexpected turn. For one thing, he found that, oddly enough, he was beginning to dislike the Vicar less for standing up to him like a man and for laying aside that apologetically nervous manner with which David had always associated him.

He decided to take another line.

"Look here," he said, "I think it's much better we should understand one another once

for all. I don't pretend to know much about religion, but I like my parish church, and I'm Churchwarden here, and it's our living—and—well, you must appreciate the position, I'm sure. Everything was going quite well under the late Vicar. And then you came along—I must put it bluntly, you know—and you start altering everything and introducing all kinds of things we haven't been used to, and having these Confessions and vestments and Choral Celebrations—and—well, what I want to know is, where is it all leading to? It seems to me to be part of this Anglo-Catholic business which wants to lead us back to Rome. Where are you going to stop? Where is your obedience to the Prayer Book and the Bishop and all that? I don't pretend to understand these things, but, damn it all, you've made me your Churchwarden, and I must know where I am. I'm all in the dark at present."

Mr. Stanson's nervousness here took a new turn. He began to talk very rapidly about the Catholic religion, and the Catholic Revival, and the need of restoring all sorts of usages with which David was totally unfamiliar. He could not stop talking. And the more he

talked, the more incomprehensible he became, and the more confused were any conclusions David could form. Mr. Stanson's mind seemed to be a maze of unintelligible enthusiasms and to function in a world which David knew nothing about, and with which he had not the slightest sympathy. The conversation, which, at one stage, had seemed to be assuming a satisfactory point of issue, had drifted suddenly into a whirlpool of chaotic ideas. David came away feeling that anyhow he must do something. It was an infernal nuisance having his attention taken up like this with religious controversies, but he must do something. Mr. Stanson might ultimately be dangerous. He was assuming altogether too free a hand. There must be limits, and it fell to David somehow to guard these limits.

Somehow or other he must acquaint himself with the subject. It was characteristically David's method to wish to understand what he was interfering in, if he had to interfere. It was like having to master the rudiments of the King's Regulations before interviewing prisoners.

He thought of consulting the family solicitor.

But he hadn't much faith in Johnson, and he disliked his pompous and pettifogging mentality.

He thought of the Bishop. But the time for that had hardly come. He must know his own ground first. To be fair to Stanson he must understand Stanson's standpoint.

Then suddenly, on the way home, he remembered Willoughby. Willoughby was just the man. He would write to him as soon as he could find his address.

Yes, the idea of Willoughby was an inspiration. He would use Willoughby to explain Stanson. Then he could tackle the situation, and, without being unjust to the new Vicar, stop any nonsense. It would be a relief to get the matter finally off his chest. There were such hundreds of more important matters demanding his attention.

CHAPTER III

BY WHAT AUTHORITY ?

I

The Grey House,
Kenhampton,
November 4th.

MY DEAR WILLOUGHBY,

You will be very surprised to have a letter from me, for the last time we met must have been in '18 at Borre, before you were wounded at Strazeele. And I think you will be still more surprised when you find that I am writing to you about religion. No, I've not turned religious, but I remember the talk we had at Pradelles one night, when we got stuck on the edge of a barrage and couldn't get back. You told me you were an Anglo-Catholic, and as you're the only one I know, and as you're a padre, and it's your job to know about religion, I felt that you were the person to write to. I'll explain why.

You know my father died while I was in France, and I've come back to find myself landlord and squire and churchwarden, and I've settled down already into being the respectable, sober country gentleman. Well, all was going as well as usual until a new Vicar came here, who, I suppose, is High Church, or Anglo-Catholic, or whatever you call it. And he's started making an infernal mess of things. He has begun to introduce all kinds of curious services and odd customs and weird rules which, it seems to me, he has no right to introduce. Only a day or two ago he had an extraordinary service which seemed to depend on lighting a number of yellow candles and blowing them out again : it was something to do with praying for the dead, I believe.

He encourages the children to come to Confession, and he hears confessions in the church. He's put up a sort of confessional box in the church. I think that gets my goat more than anything else. I suppose you believe in it, but it seems to me to be simply prying into children's sins, and taking an unhealthy interest in sin, and is altogether beastly and bad for them as well as for him.

Then we have prayers to the Virgin Mary, and Mass—as he calls it—Mass every day. I won't say that he has actually emptied the church, for the children like him, and there are a handful of people who don't seem to mind. But the majority are very much upset. My mater is upset. The other day he started wafer bread at the Communion, and she feels very deeply about it. It's an awful shame to upset old people like that, don't you think ?

We never know from day to day how much more he is going to change. I have been to see him, and have tackled him. But he talks so quickly when he's nervous—and I seem to make him nervous—that I can't get him at all or make him out, except that I admit he is absolutely sincere. So I thought I would write to you.

For I feel I must do something, but I want, before I do anything, to understand what all this Anglo-Catholic business means. I don't want to do anything that is unfair, and I want to know my ground first. It suddenly occurred to me that you would know all about it and could explain. So I've hunted you down and am writing this letter.

I know that I have put it all very badly. It doesn't seem, when I read over this letter again, as though I have asked you any definite question. The trouble is that there is not one single big issue to complain about; it is a number of issues, all these little changes grouped together. It's difficult to select one more than the others. What I feel is that this padre—Stanson is his name, by the way—is introducing a different religion. I can understand a man being a Roman Catholic, but I do feel it isn't quite playing the game for the fellow to come here, and take the pay of the C. of E. and yet to run riot and introduce all these new ideas on his own authority, just because he likes them himself. He should think of other people. I don't mean by that that I am greatly concerned for myself. I have never been very religious, as you know, and I don't pretend that I cared so deeply for the services which we used to have, as, for example, my mother did. But I feel I ought to protect the rights of the people who do care. And there is a good deal about these very extreme High Church ways which I own that I do resent.

My main object in writing to you, however, is to ask what you Anglo-Catholics are aiming at. Are you simply trying to take us back to Rome by another road? And how do you justify your promise to be loyal to the Bishop? Where does the C. of E. come in, and where are the Thirty-nine Articles and the Prayer-Book? I expect you are very busy, but I should be awfully glad if you would explain these things a bit. Would it ever be possible for you to run down and see us? It is a lovely bit of country and I could give you some riding, if you care for it. My mother would be delighted to see you. Do you ever see any of the old Battery? I met Warwick in town the other day, looking as fit as a fiddle. Tracey, you know, was killed at Leers in the advance in the last three weeks of the war. Rotten luck, wasn't it?

I shall be awfully grateful if you can find time to answer.

Yours ever,

DAVID LYALL.



II

St. John's Presbytery,
North Ham, E. 35,
10th November.

MY DEAR LYALL,

I was delighted to hear from you, and your letter quite clearly expresses your problem. I entirely sympathize, and I shall do my best to explain the troubles of which you speak. I own that it will be difficult—difficult not because our ideas are hard to explain, but because your questions cover such a vast ground. I can't attempt it all in one letter..

I think you will agree that it is much better to begin with fundamentals, and not to attempt to deal with various details, such as Confession and Requiem Masses and the use of wafer bread. It is as hopeless to give a satisfactory explanation as to these things separately as it would be suddenly to start describing the meaning of a quadrant angle to a person who had never heard of a trajectory. Don't think that I am suggesting you are unusually ignorant. You are in a very natural position, and I'm not claiming to be an expert. I only

write to insist on the need for first principles first, so that, having laid these, we may deal with the details later.

For the same reason I don't want to dwell at all upon your parish priest's methods. For all I know he may have rushed things and behaved tactlessly. That is altogether another question and is entirely a personal one. Obviously, I must answer your questions impersonally, and it is much better, not only as a stranger to your village, but for all reasons, that I should do so.

The first misunderstanding which I want to clear away is that the changes you complain about are due to the mere whims and fancies of the offending Stanson. I constantly find people of all sorts taking up this line and talking about the "odd service" they were at the other day, or the "strange goings on" of some priest who has introduced Catholic ceremonial. Now, if there is one thing certain, it is that these things are neither odd nor strange. They may be thoroughly bad and unjustified—I am not dealing with that yet. I am only insisting that all the things of which you speak, and the things of which people speak when they come

across stray fragments of Catholic custom, are part of a perfectly established order. Catholic liturgy and ceremonial are almost stereotyped. You can read every word and follow out the exactest rubrical directions, if you know where to look. I will tell you about that presently. But I want to lay, first of all, a great stress on this point, because I fancy that it is a cause of a good deal of popular mistrust as to the Anglo-Catholic movement.

If you think of the changes of which you complain as mere whims and creations of your parish priest's fancy, you will of course resent them all the more, because you will think of them as resting on no other authority than his own. This idea that he is doing it on his own authority runs all through your letter. Also, if they are his own creations, you will never know what next he is going to invent : this suggestion correspondingly is contained in your letter. I remember some friends of mine describing a service they had been to on a Good Friday. They were quite keen Anglican churchpeople, and one of them was the Chancellor of a diocese. But they talked as though this service had never before been

heard of. As a matter of fact it was the Veneration of the Cross and the Mass of the Presanctified, the liturgy and ceremonial of which they would find in every Catholic church on that day in the whole of Western Europe. And they had been talking about it as though, because they had never heard of it, no one else had ever heard of it. They said it was "extreme," though there can be no extremes in the full Catholic order.

In the same way, you could buy a book to-morrow which would set out all that your Vicar has ever introduced, and all that he ever will introduce. The only uncertain factor is how much of it he will venture to introduce. It will probably be only a very little, for evidently, from what you say in your letter, he is a very cautious man.

Well, that's my first point. I have taken so much time over it that I must content myself with sketching out only one other fundamental principle in this letter.

I shall choose as my second subject the question which arises immediately out of the first.

What is this prescribed body of Catholic

order and custom which your parish priest is seeking to restore by tiny fragments? What is the meaning of the word "Catholic" which I have been using so glibly? Well, I will try to tell you, from my own point of view, which is, of course, that of believing that this Catholic religion is the truest religion of all, and that it bears unmistakably in itself the marks of the divine revelation.

The Catholic religion may be looked at from two standpoints. It is a body of doctrine, and it is a system of sacraments. Of course, I cannot here go into any details, but I want to sketch in outline how this religion has come down to us at the present day.

It is to be found in a body, or a family, which has continued down the generations from the time Our Lord was living among us on earth. This body is the Catholic Church, and you discover where the Catholic Church of to-day is just as you discover who are the descendants of any other family. You trace the regular succession. In this case you trace the succession through the Bishops. And you find that this regular succession of Bishops is an uninterrupted chain of succession,

coming down through the ages without a single break. The succession is not important in itself, it is simply the outer framework of the picture and one of the marks by which you can identify the Church. What is important is to grasp this idea of a succession through the ages, not only of the human personnel, but of the doctrinal authority and the sacramental life of which the persons are the stewards. Think of this religion in itself as a body, a body which grows and develops as time goes on. That, I imagine, will give you a clearer picture of the Catholic Faith.

I am not going to worry you now with details. Like any other question the subject is a complicated one. But broadly you have this continuity, and where you have the continuity and development, you have the Catholic Church. A number of bodies, as you know, have from time to time broken away from this continuous development. Usually they have said that the development had gone wrong and that they must go back to an earlier state of affairs. But the moment you begin to do this, to break off from the main body of doctrine and sacraments and devotion and

custom, you begin to develop all the evidences of a break. The Protestant Nonconformist bodies, for instance, not only have lost the episcopal succession but they don't believe in the idea of an episcopal succession. They have not only lost the Catholic sacramental life, but they have ceased to believe in the sacraments as Catholics have always believed in them. They can't show an uninterrupted succession, either in doctrine or in sacraments or in the ministry. On their own showing there is a gap of several centuries during which this body, the Church, went wrong. Remember that. On their own statement there has been a gap.

I am not taking on myself the right to judge them. They have their own line of country to follow and their own duty. What I am doing is to emphasize that, from what I have called the Catholic standpoint, they cannot be part of the Church because their succession is not continuous. Now where is this succession continuous? It is continuous in the Roman Catholic Church, and it is continuous in the Orthodox Churches of the East. When we come to the case of the Church of England we

come to the more difficult issue which we are considering.

Our (Anglo-Catholic) claim is this. We say that the English Church did not lose her episcopal and her sacramental succession. You know as well as I that she herself claims to have continued the Episcopate right through the Reformation down to the present day. But she did undoubtedly depart a considerable way from the doctrinal succession. She threw overboard not all, but a considerable quantity of the doctrine, and the devotions arising from that body of doctrine, which the rest of the Church possessed. We think that the schism from the rest of the Western Church was a misfortune which might have been avoided if both sides had been wiser. But it happened, and consequently the English Church has remained isolated from the rest of the Church in whose developments she should naturally have shared. For a long while she was officered and peopled almost entirely by Protestants—that is by those who did not agree with the Catholic principle. And only in the last century did she begin to revive in a Catholic direction.

What then were those of us who believe in the Catholic principle to do? If she had been a Protestant body, if, that is, she had lost the succession of the Sacraments, our duty would clearly have been to leave her and to join the Roman Catholics or the Eastern Church. But we are confident that she did not lose the sacramental life. And our task is therefore gradually to restore to her that body of doctrine and practice and liturgy and devotion which the rest of the Church, and particularly the Western Church—since we live in the West—possesses. There are differences which have grown up, as we believe, since our break with Rome. But of those I won't speak now. I want only to make clear that, believing the Catholic religion is true, we claim it to be the right, and indeed the duty of the English Church to regain the whole of that religion which the rest of the Church possesses.

It may really be put like this : if there had been no break the Church in England would be just in the same position as the Church in Greece or Germany. Therefore, as far as we can, we must act as though no schism had occurred in the Church, and share in the growth

and development of the rest of the Church. But there are two qualifications to this general rule. One is that the Churches of the East broke off from the West in the tenth century and that we, unlike the Roman Catholics, are not prepared to unchurch this great body. But, necessarily, through their being separated from the West, they have developed their own lines of worship and practice a little more distinctly than if they had been sharing the experience of the West. So, since the two paths branch off, we must necessarily reject anything in the Western tradition from which the East entirely dissents. The second qualification is that, since our break with Rome, certain Papal claims have been defined which the East does not accept, and to which we have never been committed. Short of this, we must, so far as we can, recover the normal position which we should have held had there been no breach with the Western Church at the Reformation.

When, therefore, you may ask where this guide-book is to be found which will show all these innovations of which you complain, my answer is—in Rome and the East. When

you ask what is our authority, I say that body of the Catholic tradition, which is common to Rome and the East, or which belongs to the West, but against which the East raises no protest.

The difference between us and Rome is that we don't unchurch the great Eastern Churches as they do. We don't say they are outside the Church. Therefore, although we claim that the English Church ought to be in as full possession of the Catholic religion as the Church in France or Austria or Spain, we qualify this by saying "except in things against which the Eastern Church has definitely protested." We belonged geographically and were ecclesiastically committed to the Western or Latin Church for many centuries after the breach had taken place with the East. As we cannot follow both paths, it is naturally the Western path which is ours. But since we believe that the East is part of the Church, and our appeal is to the whole Church, we cannot absolutely commit ourselves to any Western doctrines from which the East actually dissents. So far as we can, we appeal to East as well as West.

You say in your letter that you have expressed yourself badly. Well I have done far worse, because I am trying to compass in one letter a whole and complete explanation. I can't do that. I must leave a great deal unsaid ; and, besides, I am getting tired. It is past twelve, and I've been at work all day.

I'm so glad to have your news of Warwick. No, I've seen none of the fellows since I came here. I so rarely get away. I should love to come down to your village one day for a breath of fresh air. After the New Year it may be possible. And now, for the moment, good-night. . . .

Yours ever,

CHARLES WILLOUGHBY.

III

The Grey House,
Kenhampton,

November 14th.

MY DEAR WILLOUGHBY,

It really is very good of you to have written at such length, and taken such pains to answer me when you are so busy and tired. It makes

me feel very ungrateful in criticizing any of your statements. But I know you would wish me to say exactly what I feel.

Frankly, I don't feel at all satisfied by your letter.

As far as I understand it, you Anglo-Catholics virtually claim that the Church of England ought to have the same religion as the Roman Catholics, with a few minor reservations. You openly say that that is what you are out to restore. You show me I was right in suspecting what the new Vicar was doing. I don't know that I feel very deeply about it, and it may possibly be true that the Catholic religion is better than the Anglican. That I don't pretend to know. I only know I was brought up in, and belong to, the Church of England.

And, for the life of me, I can't understand how you justify your position, as you define it yourself. You talk about the Church of England being part of the Catholic Church, and you seem to assume that she has no right to have a distinct religion of her own. But, as I understand it, that is just what she set up at the Reformation. She drew up a reformed

religion which was a middle-course between Romanism and Puritanism, and she defined it clearly in the Prayer Book and the Thirty-nine Articles. It may not be so good a religion as the Roman Catholic religion, but that's not the point. The point is that the Church of England did do this, and if you choose to belong to the Church of England you must accept her religion and not try to introduce some other.

Please don't think this great cheek of me, or that I want to argue. I only want to understand, and I'm putting my ideas bluntly so that you can answer bluntly. My question is—what about the Reformation and the Prayer Book? Do you repudiate them? And, if not, how do you justify trying to reintroduce the very things which they rejected?

I won't write more now. That seems to me the real issue; anyhow, it is the point which I would awfully like to have answered. Then I shall know where I am with Stanson.

Yours ever,

DAVID LYALL.

IV

St. John's Presbytery,
North Ham,

16th November.

MY DEAR LYALL,

I felt that in my first letter I must sketch the general principle of the Anglo-Catholic claim, at the cost of not coming to exact issues. Therefore I expected your letter, and I'm not at all surprised that, at present, you think our claim is unjustified.

Now, having sketched the foundations, I can come to concise answers.

You express in your letter quite plainly the average Anglican (i.e., non-Anglo-Catholic) argument. You point to the Prayer Book as an exact standard of a Church of England religion, which is neither to be Roman Catholic nor Protestant. At first sight I quite agree that the Prayer Book, and certainly the Thirty-nine Articles, would give that impression.

But the truth seems to me much less simple than that. The truth about a thing rarely

is simple ; the true answer rarely admits of a plain " yes " or " no."

We must turn to history.

As I see it, what the English Church did at the Reformation may be summed up as follows :

(1) She protested that she had the right to repudiate the Papal claims. If the Eastern Churches are part of the Catholic Church, as they did the same thing, that did not necessarily cut her off from the Catholic religion.

(2) She repudiated and swept away certain popular superstitions and current abuses, which were not part of the official body or development of Latin doctrine, but had crept in through human ignorance. About the same time the Roman Catholic Council of Trent did the same thing.

(3) She found that, by the time Elizabeth came to the throne, she contained within her borders a great many different classes of people—not only High and Low Churchmen, but actual Roman Catholics and Puritan Protestants. She tried to retain as many as possible of these varieties, and the Prayer Book must be read in that light. In other words the

Prayer Book was not meant to lay down an exact uniform standard, a sort of definite Church of England religion, but was a deliberate attempt to legislate, as far as possible, for a number of different interpretations.

If that is true, the Prayer Book must be read as a minimum basis, and not as a complete standard of authority. That is the sense in which I agree to accept it.

Is that true? Look to history, and I think you will find that that is the sense in which it had been taken by all Anglicans. There were the High Churchmen like Archbishop Laud and the Caroline divines. They certainly interpreted it in a very different sense from the Low Churchmen. Eventually, through political causes, that High Church tradition was for a long while almost obliterated. But it must be taken very much into account for the purpose we are considering. Then there were the Low Churchmen, who interpreted it in a very Protestant sense. Such uniformity as eventually arose, until the Oxford Movement, was, as I have said, merely due to the fact that the more Catholic or High Church tradition was temporarily

almost obliterated by the secession of the Jacobite non-Jurors.

(4) But even if we take the Prayer Book as providing one definite standard of religion, there is a further consideration.

Is the English Church made by the Prayer Book, or is the Prayer Book made by the English Church? Which is greater, and which comes first?

The answer is obviously that the English Church comes first, and can be thought of as apart from the Prayer Book.

She created the Prayer Book.

Now, this being so, we must allow for movements taking place within her that cannot be tied down to the letter of the Prayer Book. The letter of the Prayer Book is being altered at this very moment, as you will see in the newspapers, and this is only natural and right if a living entity is not going to be cramped and stifled by a rigid law. The best laws are those which are made in response to a demand, or even because it is found that old laws are not strictly being obeyed. The spirit or movement comes first, even before the law is amended.

That is exactly what has been happening in the English Church. And not, by any means, only in the Catholic direction. No one exactly obeys the Prayer Book.

The Protestants, and what we will call "the official Anglican party," don't obey it. They don't keep the Fast Days or Days of Abstinence. They don't preach the sermon on Sunday mornings, as directed, in the Communion Service. They leave out parts of the service, and interpolate hymns and anthems, where there is no place directed for them. They introduce Harvest Festivals and other days which find no place in the Prayer Book calendar. They have mission services, which are nowhere to be found in that Book. I could go on with innumerable instances.

I don't complain of this. I say it is natural, and that the Anglican Bishops very wisely allow such movements to take place, for the reason I have suggested, in spite of the letter of the Prayer Book. But I do claim that, correspondingly, it is just as legitimate for the Catholic Movement to revive services and practices and ceremonials which are not to be found mentioned in the Prayer Book. For

the letter of the law must be, in a body such as the Church of England, subservient to the spirit, and not the spirit to the letter.

Read up the history of the Catholic Revival, and you will find that it has been a perfectly spontaneous development. It hasn't, I mean, been forced by a few law-breaking extremists. When it began it had public opinion, the law-courts, the Press and the Bishops all against it. It won its way. It couldn't be checked. To-day it has not only won an officially recognized position in the Church of England, it has not only become the most vigorous section in the Church of England, but it has permeated all parts of the Church of England. The services and the order which you complain of as having been interfered with are a result of that permeation. What your late Vicar did and your father accepted, your grandfather and his Vicar would have denounced as Romish and disloyal. Why call a halt at one particular stage?

I believe this is obviously a movement which has a supernatural force behind it, and, as such, can no more be stopped at a particular point than the tide. It is the Church of England

herself, who is feeling her way back to the full Catholic Faith, all over the country. How else can you account for the spread of the Anglo-Catholic Movement? And therefore no letter of the law has the right, or the power, ultimately to stop it.

I won't write more now.

Yours ever,

CHARLES WILLOUGHBY.

P.S.—I see I haven't mentioned the Thirty-nine Articles. They have much less authority than the Prayer Book. The clergy are only required to give a general assent to them as a whole—not in detail. And the laity are not required to give any assent.

v

The Grey House,

Kenhampton,

November 20th.

MY DEAR WILLOUGHBY,

Thanks very much for your last letter. I suppose I'm very dense, but it still leaves one point quite unexplained. At least I don't see it.

You say that everyone in the Church of England has used the Prayer Book for his own ends, and that therefore the Anglo-Catholic has an equal right to do the same.

But, surely, the difference is that the Bishops allow the other people's interpretations, but they don't allow the extreme Anglo-Catholic interpretation. Anyhow, suppose your Bishop does forbid things you want to do, are you prepared to obey him?

You say that the Prayer Book has only a very limited authority for you in the Church of England. Are Anglican Bishops any greater authority? And if not, is there any authority in the Church of England which you will obey?

You must come down and stay here after the New Year. You'll love the village. And sometimes in January we get quite a decent spell of weather, a sort of foretaste of spring, before we plunge into the winter of February and March.

Yours ever,

DAVID LYALL.

VI

St. John's Presbytery,
North Ham,

November 22nd.

MY DEAR LYALL,

The answer I am going to give to your last question will seem to you exactly like saying, "I obey my Bishop when I agree with him and disobey him when I don't." Actually, it is the kind of obedience any man gives under any system, except an autocracy.

The Anglican Bishops aren't infallible, and no one would either ask, or give, an unquestioning obedience. It can only be obedience so long as the Bishops carry out the law of the authority which we accept. Even in the Army, which people imagine falsely is the nearest approach to an autocracy in our free land, we only obeyed the C.O. so far as he obeyed King's Regulations.

So we get back again to the authority behind the Bishops. And you, by the way, with a keen perception, have fastened at once on the criticism which is most levelled at us Anglo-Catholics. It is the easiest and most

obvious point of attack against us, because, from our point of view, force of circumstances has complicated the position in the English Church. You are quite right. This question of authority is the chief issue.

Now let me recapitulate, to show where we stand regarding authority.

We accept absolutely the official doctrines and rules of the Catholic Church. Up to the tenth century there is no dispute as to what that authority consists of. Then comes the split between West and East. We don't narrow the Church down to the West. We see that the East preserved the Catholic machinery and the sacramental life, but for five centuries more we in the English Church followed the West. Then comes our split with the West. Again, we believe that by this severance from the Papacy we did not *ipso facto* lose our sacramental life. But we did lose a great deal of the Catholic doctrine and practice which the Western Church possessed.

Because the English Church retained the sacramental life, we believe her still to be a living entity which can be regarded separately

from her own Prayer Book or her own officers. In our view the split was a misfortune, however inevitable local circumstances may have made it. But we regard the rightful place of the English Church to be an unseparated part of the Catholic Church, and, so far as we can, we are trying to heal that division by acting, as far as possible, as though the divisions had not taken place. We appeal therefore, first, to the doctrine and practice which both East and West hold in common, and secondly that doctrine and practice which the West holds, provided that the East does not actually oppose it. That seems to be the obvious principle to follow, because, considering the breaks have taken place, it is the nearest working principle to an organically undivided Church. We regard the schism, and therefore the present position, as artificial and unnatural, and therefore, to some extent, we have to construct a working principle which, as near as can be, is an adjustment to the normal situation. We believe that the mind of the Church is still inspired by the Holy Spirit and that there is movement and development going on, in spite of divisions.

We say our place is in the English Church because we don't think the English Church ever lost the essential factor, that is the sacramental life. We believe that we, in our Movement, are the medium through which the spirit of the English Church is working forward to the full Catholic faith and membership of which she has temporarily been deprived. We are confirmed in our belief by the experience of the progress of the Movement in the face of humanly impassable obstacles.

In this light we approach the local Anglican authority of the Prayer Book and the Bishops.

It is an interesting conjecture whether, if through the Prayer Book the English Church had been committed to actual rejection and denial of essential Catholic doctrine, our position would be justified. I am inclined to think it would be, because I don't see the English Church as only a system of law, but a living entity, as distinct from that law as the English nation is from its own Acts of Parliament. I should be inclined to say that it would be our duty from within the English Church to undo the denials. But the question doesn't arise, from my point of view, because I believe

the Prayer Book was deliberately drawn up only as a minimum basis—not complete, omitting much that is Catholic, but allowing for our position.

Therefore, I come back to your original question. I obey the Anglican Bishops so far as they carry out their duties as Catholic prelates. If and where their orders clash with Catholic doctrine and practice, then, allowing for questions of expediency and policy—I mean for the desirability of obeying them and avoiding revolt in things which may not at the moment be essential—Catholic doctrine and practice must come first. I wonder if I have made the position clear.

The best simile I can think of is to suppose that the control of Berkshire was seized by people who broke off from, and successfully resisted, allegiance to the rest of England. Assuming that you did not think that the ideal or normal position of Berkshire was to be a separate kingdom, you would work constitutionally to restore the unity as far as possible, working on the principle that the break had not taken place. If you were very law-abiding and constitutional, as we Anglo-Catholics are,

you would not actively revolt, but you would work to restore the unity, by interpreting, as far as possible, Berkshire local law by English law, especially if, as in our case, the Berkshire law had deliberately left this opening by not framing a *complete* separate code of law.

We might follow that simile up later. As Advent and Christmas draw nearer I think we must wait till we can do so conversationally. Correspondence, beyond a certain point, isn't satisfactory enough for thrashing out details—especially if we're both busy men.

All I leave with you is this. We are accused of being a law to ourselves and of relying only on our own private judgment. You may disagree with our ideas, but that accusation is obviously untrue. We appeal to a very definite authority outside ourselves, a very clear rule of authority—all that East and West believe and practise—and all that the West practises except in things from which the East definitely dissents.

The rule is, I agree, from a superficial point of view, involved, but that is simply because the position is involved. It cannot be an absolute rule. A principle like this, whether

it is right or wrong, tends to be too subtle for absolute rule. But I have tried to lay down a rule as nearly as possible. The schisms are abnormal and unnatural.

Till the New Year then,

Yours ever,

CHARLES WILLOUGHBY.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST EVENING—THE NECESSITY OF THE CATHOLIC RELIGION

I

It was mid-January before Willoughby came to Kenhampton. I shall not describe him, because, if you have read his letters, you will have formed your own mind-picture of him, and my description would be as ungrateful as the illustrations which an imperfect artist draws of some book-hero. The impression you have formed of Willoughby is probably slight, but there will inevitably have been an impression. Whatever it is, I have no wish to disturb it.

Meanwhile, David had laid aside all consideration of his religious difficulties. It was easy for him to do so, because he found such a subject foreign to his range of special interests. He was determined to tackle it, once for all, only on account of his rather pronounced sense of duty. Moreover, nothing very much

had happened in the village to disturb the armistice. The Vicar did not seem to be inclined to raise any particularly acute troubles. There was a Midnight Mass at Christmas, which created some excitement, but, of course, David and his mother did not attend. For the rest, the parish entered into a stage of comparative peace and lethargy.

The weather, when Willoughby arrived, was of that gentle, uncertain type which is characteristic of the early year. There would be pale, fitful sunshine in the morning and the distant downs would stand out clearly against the slight banks of southerly cloud. At periods one could almost sit comfortably on the terrace and pretend that spring was in the air. But gradually the gaunt trees would begin to sway uneasily in the breeze, and the sun would disappear, and a faint moist mist would descend, laying its damp cloak on the naked countryside. There would be a chill feeling which penetrated into the recesses of the house. Usually David and his guest rode or walked hard. The car was only used for descending into Newbury or Reading for shopping purposes. Finally the light

would grow dimmer, and there would arrive at last that hour when it was legitimate to bask before a glowing fire, a fire of wood and coal which blazed in open grates just as it must have burned in those very places back in Stuart times. Tea was a delightful moment to look forward to. And eventually there arrived the period after dinner when David's study was invaded, and they could sit in two luxuriously easy chairs in full reach of the pleasant warmth. "The great compensation of winter," said David. "One can forgive the winter everything for this."

Willoughby heartily agreed. "I've only got four days," he remarked, "and you have no idea what a holiday like this means to me. But I don't forget I'm here for a purpose. I suggest that we bar any religious talk all the day, and reserve only these evenings in your study after dinner. I'm sure it will be better for both of us to keep some such rule."

"Oh, rather!" said David.

II

Our duty, therefore, is concerned strictly with the evenings. And we enter, on the first

evening, the little study with the heavily veiled windows, and the log fire, and the easy chairs, while, within reach, the whisky and soda stands invitingly on a silver tray. From the grey walls a large portrait of one of David's Georgian ancestors looks down on the scene with a certain ironic disapproval. Willoughby fills his pipe from a jar of John Cotton which his host has generously placed at his disposal.

"In your last letter," remarked David presently, "you said that the real issue was the question of authority. But I think you have got to go farther back than that. I mean, that I think you've got to show that this Catholic religion of yours is worth re-introducing. Suppose that the position in the Church of England is all that you've explained. I still don't see why there shouldn't be invented by the Church of England a Church of England religion, which is neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant. I always supposed it had done so, and that it was better than both. Is the Catholic religion worth introducing?"

"That's a very good point to begin from," Willoughby answered. "I quite agree that isn't enough to show that the English Church

is under an obligation to continue the old religion, unless it can be shown that that religion is the best. Well, I'll try to address myself to that larger question. I suppose I needn't go back over the fundamental Christian position? I can do that, if you like, only it will prolong our conversation a good deal and we shan't get very far in our four evenings. But I must be sure that we are starting on a common basis."

"Yes, I think I can say I accept all that. I'm not, as you know, a very religious man, but I do believe Christianity is the right thing."

"We'll deal with your own religious sense some other time. But what I want to know is, do you believe God was incarnate in the world as Christ, and that Christ came to leave with man a means of salvation, something which would always be within his reach to keep him in close touch with God and spiritual life?"

"Yes, I think I believe that."

"Well, then, as I fancy I said in one of my long letters, you may divide this means into two; you may look on it as leaving with man certain truths, a certain revelation of truth, and also the sacraments. Now in both of these

cases there are two conceptions of the system which our Lord left behind Him. One I will call the perpetuative system and one the commemorative. The first is the Catholic system and the second is the Protestant. You have to make up your mind which of these two is true."

"I'm afraid I don't a bit follow what you mean."

"No : I'll explain. I'll begin with the Protestant theory, because that is much the simplest to describe. The Protestant theory agrees with Catholicism that God was present as Christ in quite a different way from His omnipresence everywhere in the universe. It was an Incarnation, a focus of the Divine Presence. Well, there were these few years of His presence in history, and then the system came to an end. He ascended into Heaven. The miracles ceased, His special incarnate presence ceased. The religion which He left was a commemorative religion. We'll take the doctrinal side first. He was no longer present to teach. He was present as God is always present, of course, but His special presence had ceased. And so He left behind

Him a body of truth which was enshrined in the Bible, and that was to remain finally for all time. No one was left to interpret it : He wasn't there any longer to explain, as He had explained to His disciples. The guide-book was to be its own guide, and people only had that to look back upon and to frame their religion on that by themselves.

"The Catholic religion is, on the other hand, a perpetuative one. It agrees that in a sense the one system came to an end at the Ascension, but only to a certain extent. It believes that Christ is still in His Church, not simply as God is present everywhere, but in a special way, just as the Incarnation was a special way. It agrees that He left a deposit of the truth, but it says that the Spirit of God actually resides in the Church, and that the Church is the living body of Christ, so that through it Christ speaks and reveals more of the meaning of this truth which He gave to man."

"What—you mean it can add new truths ?" said David.

"Not new truths, but further interpretations of the deposit of truth. It is a process of

unfolding, not only in doctrine, but in practice and devotion and discipline. In fact the Church is the voice by which God is still speaking. His teaching is perpetual, perpetuative—it didn't simply come to an end and remain crystallized in a book.

“I needn't bother you about the details of how this authority works, except to say that, as in everything else, God uses, according to the Catholic belief, ordinary natural means for His supernatural guidance. In this case He uses the natural agency of men's minds and intelligence and consciousness. This doesn't mean that individual priests and theologians are infallible. (You know the difference between the psychology of a crowd and the individuals who make up the crowd.) It means that when the whole Church becomes conscious of a doctrine, that is of an interpretation, of the original Faith, or of a practice or discipline, it is not simply the Church as a human organization speaking, but it is God more and more unfolding his revelation to man.”

“That seems rather a lot to swallow.”

“Does it? And yet it is the same principle

which applies everywhere else. When you get a development of any kind which people accept and which stands the test of time, it's a fairly sure indication to us that it is true. It's the ordinary process of development or evolution. However, let's get back to that later. I want to deal for a moment with the sacramental side, where you will see the difference between the Protestant and the Catholic theories more clearly.

“The Protestant theory, in the same way, is commemorative. Christ is no longer present in an incarnate form—He is only present as God is present everywhere. So the sacraments, which are two only, are commemorations. You only receive Christ in Communion as you receive Him if you listen to a Beethoven sonata or see a beautiful sunset—if you are in the mood to be conscious of, and responsive to, the spiritual presence of God. But the Catholic claim, once more, is a perpetuation of the time Christ was on earth. It teaches that He is actually present in the sacraments, not simply in His omnipresence, but in a special incarnate presence. He is present in Mass, because the Host becomes Christ Him-

self. It is true there is a difference. We can't see Him. His physical and spiritual body have become one, and He can be present in this incarnate way unlocalized, that is, not only in one place at a time, but wherever Mass is offered, because He no longer subjects Himself to physical laws. But He is there in the Mass, as He was present in Palestine. And, because the Host is reserved in the tabernacles of Catholic churches, He is always present in His churches in this way. The Incarnation didn't come to an end. We haven't to look back merely on a book—we have Christ still with us as a living authority. We don't have simply to look back at His incarnate presence in Palestine thousands of years ago. He is still present in Mass, and the sacrifice of Calvary goes on unceasingly. It has never come to an end."

Willoughby paused and relit his pipe.

"I've put it crudely," he said. "But that's the issue which you have first to decide. Which do you think is right—the Catholic or the Protestant idea?"

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II

There was a long pause.

"The Protestant idea is much easier to believe," David said at length. "I should call the Catholic theory much—well, much more ambitious. But where's the proof that it isn't merely a fairy story?"

"Well, that's a large issue," Willoughby said, smiling, "and reason won't decide it. It will only give you probabilities. That's all I can do. The real solution has to be your own consciousness—which one day may suddenly open and reveal to you this truth. That is what the theologians call a 'gift of faith.' However, we are merely discussing, you will remember, which is the better religion of the two. So, I imagine, for that purpose, probabilities will do."

David nodded.

"I can suggest one of two indications as to probabilities," Willoughby returned. "One is that the Catholic conception of Christ mysteriously continuing His ministry is a much bigger idea than the theory that this ministry ceased thousands of years ago. You said your-

self that the Protestant theory was easier to believe. That is only another way of saying that it lies more within our human imagination. It is less mystical, more mundane. It may be right and the other wrong, but it's a smaller idea."

"Yes, I'm prepared to accept that."

"And, therefore, the probability is that the bigger idea is right. Remember that in religion you are dealing with big truths, infinite truths. The truth about it is much more likely to be beyond our imagination than small enough to be within it. Truth is usually bigger than our experience. The simpler and more easily understood theory isn't usually the right one."

"But it doesn't follow that a thing is true because it is more ambitious."

"No ; it's not an infallible sign. I only mentioned it as an indication. I take another. We'll consider the practical test. How has it worked out in history ?"

"Yes, let's take that test," said David eagerly. "Surely the Catholic Church ought to stand out as obviously the best religious body of all, if it is all you claim for it ? Take your theory about its teaching ministry and that it

is infallibly guided. Well, is it? I thought history showed the Church had made great mistakes, that she was continually taking the wrong side. Didn't she threaten Galileo until he had to say that the sun went round the earth? And hasn't she shown that she has been hopelessly corrupt and superstitious?"

"I think," remarked Willoughby, "that before we go further we must agree as to a truth which seems to cut across almost every subject. It is the truth of polarity. As far as I can see, in almost every direction nature seems to be built on the polar principle."

"On the what?"

"On the principle of a combination of opposites—male and female in sex, positive and negative, heat and cold, light and darkness—I could go on for ever."

"Well—I don't see——"

"Here, obviously, the two poles are the free will of the human agents, and the supernatural inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is the same in other kinds of inspiration. The inspiration *comes to* a composer, but his own mind works on it and co-operates in the creation of the composition. Well, the Church works on this

principle too. The human agency, the free will of the personnel, has continually made mistakes, because no one pretends it is miraculously overridden. And yet, in spite of that, the movement of the whole body has been directly inspired. It hasn't evolved error. I put it to you that that is a perfectly reasonable theory, for you find it working in all kinds of other things."

"But how can you tell where the inspiration begins and the human part ends?"

"That's really the second part of the general truth I was trying to define. You can't tell. You can never define an exact line of demarcation between the poles. If you draw a line it is an artificial one. You may say 7.59 p.m. is light and 8 p.m. is dark; but it isn't. You can't say where heat begins and cold ends——"

"They are purely terms."

"The quantities they represent, then. You can't say when a composer is inspired from without and when he himself is creating."

"What about your male and female—you can always tell the difference there, surely."

"Of course, you can always tell the difference. You can soon tell the difference between

heat and cold ; it is only the exact line of division which is impossible to draw. The polar quantities merge. The line between male and female merges in the hermaphrodite. So, in the same way, the line where human agency ends and supernatural inspiration begins in the Church is impossible to define. It simply isn't there. But it's quite possible to tell, nevertheless, at the poles—and in general—where the Church is speaking humanly and where she's speaking divinely. The individuals speak humanly—that's a general test I've given—but the main developments of faith and practice, the corporate consciousness of the Church, if you like, is divinely inspired. I don't confine myself to official pronouncements—I include general development as inspired, if the development comes through the consciousness of the main body of the Church, and is not merely a local fashion."

David leaned back in his chair and watched the smoke-rings which he was making ascend idly into the shadows. " I'm afraid I'm getting rather confused over your theories of poles and boundaries and positives and negatives, and developments, and all that sort of thing," he

remarked. "I'm not at all sure that I know what we are really talking about."

Willoughby laughed. "No," he answered, "I must be speaking in very much the same way as you say your Vicar talked when he got wound up. I'm going ahead too fast. Let's take our points again, one by one."

"That will certainly be wiser," said David.

"Well—about this polar idea. You agree that in most things in life we find two opposite factors at work, both of which we have to take into account? Go back to the example of a musical composer. Do you agree that, while, on the one side, there is his own human mind, his own creation of melodies and harmonies to be taken into account, there is something else—something which comes from outside him, which we vaguely call inspiration—but which must enter into the work as well, if the musical composition is to be created?"

"I suppose so—I'm not sure, but I suppose so."

"You will find that the rule of two opposites is so regular that it is a very suspicious circumstance if you find one factor alone and assume

that to be complete. Fatalists, for instance, have fastened on the fact that man is subject to the law of cause and effect and that outside influences compel him to perform his actions. But they are obviously wrong, because they only take the one pole into consideration. There is the opposite factor that man also has a will, that he can somehow, to a certain extent, determine for himself what he will do and what he won't do. You have the two poles of outside influence and external free will."

"Yes, I see that."

"Well, then, the next point is that you can't lay down an exact line and say that here free will begins and outside influences end. You can't trace the boundary where the external inspiration finishes and the mental work of the composer's mind begins. But it doesn't matter. Because, in the main, you can tell which is which. You can tell which is the man's free choice and which is the result of his being compelled to act through circumstances. I know I can get out of this chair or continue to sit in it : but I also know that if there were an explosion in the room which threw me out of my chair, I should have left the chair as a

result, not of my free will, but under compulsion."

"Yes—that's obvious."

"In the Church there is exactly the same combination of opposites. There is the divine inspiration, the infallibility of spiritual guidance and there is the human mind making mistakes and being guilty of all sorts of errors. Just as we are suspicious of the fatalists because they ignore one of the opposites, so we are suspicious of the people who only see in the Church a human creation and don't allow for the spiritual inspiration. We say that, as in everything else, there are the two sides. That's clear, isn't it?"

"Quite clear."

"Well, then, next we come to the same difficulty of the impossibility of laying down an exact rule as to where the infallibility ends and the human invention begins. But, once again, it doesn't matter. Though you may not be able to define a precise boundary, you can see which is human and which is divine in the acts of the Church. Like every other movement or development, only to a much greater extent, you see in the whole movement,

in the corporate consciousness, in the main development of the Church, the mark of spiritual infallibility. The individuals are fallible, but the voice of the Spirit is to be found where the entire body moves as one. That is the test we apply to other things. The convictions which we regard as most likely to be true are those which stand the test of general acceptance and of time, and are corporate main developments rather than separate individual theories."

"Yes," said David, "I see that now. But are the movements of the Church always in the right direction? Does your test hold? For instance, I thought the Church had drifted into a lot of abuses before the Reformation," he added. "Do you deny that, or do you say those abuses weren't main developments?"

"They weren't main developments, because there is another condition which I haven't named. There's a world of difference between passive acquiescence and active consent. The Church has always had to be jarred from outside into making official pronouncements, and, even in the unofficial developments, she has had to show her actual mind definitely—not by merely

drifting. That applies as a principle too, in the development of any other body.

“You can easily see the difference in the abuses of which you speak. The Latin Church was stirred very much into action by the Reformation, and the Council of Trent was the result. There you can tell the difference between what had merely grown up through silent acquiescence and human weakness, and was rejected; and, on the other hand, what the Roman Catholic corporate mind actively assented to.”

“Well, it’s a clear enough definition,” said David, “but I don’t see that it proves anything. It doesn’t show that the Catholic principle is right. You said you were going to apply a practical test.”

“Yes, I am. I want you to trace the way back to the source from which all Protestant bodies, in comparative degree, have gone for their doctrinal authority. They have all accepted some degree of this main body of development. For instance, they all base their case on the New Testament. But the New Testament is itself only an outcome of the Catholic principle—it only comes as a result of the theory of this living teaching voice.”

"I don't see that," said David, shaking the ashes out of his pipe. "I don't see that at all."

"It's merely a historical fact. It was the Church, through her Council at Carthage, who decided which among the many scriptures then in existence were genuine and which were legendary. That Council drew up our present New Testament. Therefore when Protestants accept the New Testament as their authority, they are accepting the Council which drew it up. There's no getting away from that."

"I suppose they would say that the books themselves show the marks of being genuine."

"Yes, they argue that they accept the books because of themselves, and not because of the Church. But the fact remains that they have accepted the decision of the Church. They have never reconsidered all the books afresh and come to a new and separate decision. Besides, there are scores of other instances. They accept, most of them, the Trinity, and the Trinity comes clearly through this Catholic system of an expanding development: no one would be able to arrive at that doctrine by reading the Bible for himself. And the Church of England, even from your standpoint, has

gone much further. She has followed the path of main development and accepted Catholic authority, up to the point of preserving an episcopate, the creeds, the sacramental principle. Now this is the point I am driving at : if you find all the various Protestant bodies following the Catholic path and then, one by one, breaking off at various points, the presumption is that the Catholic path is the source of authority. They don't all break off at the same point : some of them accept much more Catholic doctrine than others. But they have all drawn on it. And what's more, English opinion is continually coming to see here and there, that Catholic doctrines which the Protestants rejected are really vindicated by subsequent experience, and sometimes by science. How many Protestants have learned, since the War, that to pray for the dead is far more natural and intelligent than the Protestant idea that at death we go straight to Heaven or Hell ? Then again, the Protestant theory that confession was bad for people and that secret sins ought not to be mentioned to another person, as they are in confession, is now completely denied by psychology, and the whole of the

Catholic argument as to that practice is scientifically accepted. Or again, see how individual Anglicans, and even Presbyterians, are wholeheartedly adopting the Catholic doctrine of the Mass, and the Real Objective Presence, which up to a few years ago they regarded as superstition. These little indications are all significant. That's one practical test."

III

Willoughby paused and filled his pipe. David leaned forward and flung another log on the fire, so that the flames leaped up, with fresh energy. From the hall a grandfather clock chimed the hour. Outside the windows a wintry wind howled round the corners.

"The other test is the test of what happens to the bodies which have cut themselves off from the main body," Willoughby continued. "Remember—we must apply impersonal tests. We must, that is to say, be careful not to turn aside in this connexion to see what kind of people each religion develops. We must judge the religion, so far as we can, as a religion. Now doctrinally the result is a commonplace

truism. The moment the Protestants have broken off from the main body and chosen to keep only a certain amount of the body of faith, they begin breaking up into small pieces. There are over five hundred sects in England alone. God knows how many more there are in America."

"Well, that shows liberty of thought, anyhow."

"It certainly shows that as a system this appeal, not to a living authority, but to an inanimate book, has led to five hundred contrary results. It certainly shows that the guide-book, the Bible, needs a guide, as G. K. Chesterton said recently in the *Dublin Review* ; because, so far from being clear in itself as to its directions, it has been shown capable of these hundreds of different interpretations. They all appeal to the Bible, and they all claim their interpretation is the true one.

"But that's one side. Take the sacramental side, and compare the commemorative with the perpetuative system. Put a Catholic church alongside a Protestant church, and compare them under the same conditions. In the Catholic church Mass is said every day, and

there will always be a congregation. In my own church we have two Masses a day, at seven and eight, and sometimes one at six. We have an average congregation of fifty at each—not only women, but men and boys. The Protestant church is locked up all the week. Go into a Catholic church any hour of the day and you will find a few people there praying before the Blessed Sacrament or at one of the shrines. You will find the Protestant church, if you get the doors open, deserted, dark, hideously ugly——”

“ Oh, I say, this isn't fair. They have a different system. They don't believe in using the mere buildings as you do. But they may be just as good people, if not better.”

“ I'm sure many of them are. But, my dear chap, we are judging the religions *qua* religion, and not their adherents. And we have a right to look at the churches of each and to draw certain conclusions from them. You misunderstand me, I think. I'm not denying that the Protestants reject the sacramental idea—they try not to use the outward form at all. And I'm not suggesting that because they make little use of churches and have other methods,

that their religion is proved to be less good. I am only suggesting that where you have the Catholic sacramental system, you do have infinitely greater evidences of spiritual vitality.

“ Carry that line of enquiry further. Look at the Church persisting through the ages, in spite of bad Popes, fanatical priests, and ignorant people. In spite of her mistakes the Catholic Church still holds her influence. In every nation she is to be found, sometimes gaining, sometimes losing ground, but always recovering and always there. The Catholic religion has been the inspiration of men and women in every age in every great nation of Europe. And this, in spite of appalling human failures which would certainly have destroyed an ordinary organization as completely as, for example, the monarchy has been destroyed in France. Then turn to the Protestant record. Is there any Protestant body which can boast the same widespread influence and the same continuity ? ”

“ Well, in England——”

“ My dear chap, you have indeed supplied me with an argument. Take the English Church. She, we both admit, was handed

over to what we may call an almost entirely Protestant government when the last vestige of the Catholic remnant went out from her as the non-Jurors. The eighteenth century is therefore the test. Do we find that their Protestant supremacy, on a practical test, resulted in even a normal amount of spiritual energy? On the contrary, religion sank to a lower ebb than ever before in our national history. No one denies this. Bishops often scarcely entered their dioceses, the clergy were a crying scandal, good men like Wesley despaired and left the Church, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, men were openly saying that the Church of England could not even survive."

"But she did."

"She did through the movement back towards the Catholic Faith."

David leaned forward in his chair.

"You seem to throw aside the personal test," he observed. "Is it quite fair to do this?"

"No, I don't throw it aside altogether. I only say that personal character is so intricate a factor that it is a difficult test. You will find good individuals in any collection of people,

and it is almost impossible to say how far religion has affected their goodness and how far their goodness is independent and personal. The Scottish people are naturally fond of religion, I should say, but it wouldn't be true to argue that the Protestant religion has made them religious. Even on that apparently favourable ground I think you will find among young Scots an almost wholehearted revolt against the Puritanism of the Protestant religion. The Church of Scotland will lose a great deal of hold on the next generation. But I don't want to press that test, except to say that Protestantism is being forced to alter its religious methods and the whole basis of its teaching in order to hold youth.

"No, I agree, you must not throw aside the personal test altogether, but you must examine it very cautiously. All I think I will do is to point out that the Catholic religion has produced its wonderful saints. Or I won't say 'produced.' St. Francis of Assisi would have been Francis anywhere, but the Catholic Church found a vocation for him. She could be an inspiration for him. Even more significant as an argument is the Religious Life—the fact

that there is a regular stream of men and women who are ready and eager to forsake everything and to rise to heights of religion which no Protestant record can equal."

"You mean monks and nuns?"

"Yes. It's striking that not one of the religious Orders has come to an end. Most of them began centuries ago."

"It seems rather awful to me—these people shutting themselves up and all that."

"Well, that's another question. I only draw your attention to the fact that these religious Orders have been able to keep up their tremendous heights of spiritual austerity. If you care to read—perhaps you have read—the lives of some of the religious, you may indeed feel that the discipline is 'awful.' It's a vocation to which you and I are probably not likely to be called. But it couldn't have gone on—the Orders couldn't have gone on—for hundreds of years if there were not a tremendous spiritual reality behind it all.

"And it is the Catholic religion which has done this. Again, I suggest it's significant. It suggests to me a power which is more than a natural power. You think it awful. But then

what Christ endured was awful. There are heights which are awful in religion, just occasional peaks jutting up here and there. Every religion has supplied its good men, its saints. But I think that collectively, these spiritual mountains, as distinct from the mountaineers, only belong to the Catholic territory."

IV

There was a long pause. "Any more tests?" David asked presently.

"Well, there's one other which occurs to me."

"Fire away, then."

Willoughby looked at the clock doubtfully. "It's pretty late," he said, "and the test is rather a difficult one to explain."

"You may as well try. I want you to have your full say. The hour is still young."

Willoughby settled back in his chair and laid down his pipe. "I can only draw a vague outline of it," he remarked, "because it belongs to a mystical line of thought. But I'll try to make myself clear. Remember that what we have been dealing with is whether the per-

petuative Catholic religion, or the commemorative Protestant religion, is more likely to be true. We are appealing to reason, so we can only arrive at probabilities.

“Well, this is my argument. Down here in the world of action and time we only get reflections of what is happening in a spiritual world which we can but dimly imagine. And there the realities are in eternity—they are bounded by time.”

“I don’t quite follow that.”

“I was afraid I should be rather bad at expressing it. I mean that great physical acts, historical events, are not independent. They happen because they are just reflections of what is happening in eternity. You still don’t follow? Well then, take an act. It is always, almost always, the result of a thought. The thought in a mental world comes, as it were, to the material world in the form of an act. Now, in the same way, I believe that great events here in our world are the reflection of something which happens in the world of spirit, in eternity. Or, to put it the other way round, great spiritual realities express themselves down here—are reflected here—as facts, events in history.”

“ Yes, I see that idea.”

“ It’s a Christian idea. I mean that the Bible speaks of ‘the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.’ The Incarnation, the Sacrifice of Calvary, the Passion, all the history of Our Lord on earth, were reflections of what belongs to eternity. They shouldn’t be thought of as only historical events which once happened. They never cease to happen.”

“ I don’t quite see how this——”

“ Oh yes it does. It does to my mind in this way. In the light of this idea I ask myself which would be the more probable system that Our Lord would leave for us down here—the commemoration or the perpetuation? And, for myself, I answer, without doubt, the perpetual system, because that would reproduce here in time, as nearly as could be, the corresponding truth which is always happening in eternity. Take, for instance, the Mass, the Sacrifice of Calvary which, on the principle we have been considering, is always being perpetuated in Heaven. Every day Mass is offered, indeed Mass hardly ever ceases, if you think of all the countries in the world as the sun reaches them and their time is later or

earlier than ours. If you could travel round the earth as it moves, you would see an endless chain of Masses carrying on from one country to another. Just think of it. Mass has been said daily and hourly for nineteen hundred years. It comes very near, as near as we can get in time, to the eternal counterpart."

"These are rather deep ideas," said David. "It's a bit beyond me, I'm afraid."

"And I'm getting terribly sleepy. I'm not used to a whole day of country air. I warned you, didn't I? Now I positively refuse to talk more religion until to-morrow night."

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CHAPTER V

SECOND EVENING—CATHOLICISM CAN BE ENGLISH

I

WHEN the two men left Mrs. Lyall and went into the study on the second night, they found that the fire was smouldering and nearly out. "Confound that girl," cried David irritably. "She's forgotten to look in here before she went to bed. Now it'll be ten minutes at least before we can work up a blaze. We can't talk in front of a black hearth."

"We can go back to the drawing-room," Willoughby suggested.

"Oh, no, we're not going to alter our plans just because the maid has forgotten her job." David bent down and began energetically to apply the bellows. Willoughby smiled to himself at this characteristic attitude.

The fire, however, was obstinate, and it was twenty minutes at least before it had

developed respectable proportions, and the whisky and soda had been poured out, and the moment was ripe for discussion. Then Willoughby fancied that he saw a gleam of triumph in David's eyes, as though he relished having been challenged by the smouldering grate, and having prevailed.

"You know," David said presently, "you have given me an entirely different opinion of the Catholic religion to anything I have heard before. You have almost contradicted everything I was brought up to believe. And I confess it's too sudden a change for me to be able to swallow it. I always associated Catholicism with something that was superstitious and ignorant and primitive. And most of the educated people I know look at it in the same way. How do you account for that?"

"There are a great many different reasons to account for English intelligent opinion being, in the main, anti-Catholic. One simple reason is that you must remember all our history books have been soaked with the Protestant-Whig point of view. We are only just beginning to realize what lies about

history they have sometimes told us. They told us the Reformation was a blessing, and that the monasteries had to be dissolved because they were corrupt, and that the Puritan Commonwealth was a triumph of democratic liberty, and that it was a glorious step forward in our national career when the German Georges and their mistresses finally drove out the Stuart tyrants. Well, we begin to see how one-sided a view this is. We just dimly appreciate that the industrial era was not the blessing the Victorians assured us that it was. And it has certainly prejudiced our religious outlook. Read the opinions of impartial non-Catholic students of history to-day. They don't adopt the Whig view.

“That's one answer. Another is that undoubtedly the more civilized and mechanical a nation becomes, the more liable it becomes to lose its religious sense. Thence you can argue that when people become more intelligent they cease to believe in religion. But you can only argue that, if you seriously believe that mechanical and mercenary knowledge is a higher form of intelligence than spiritual perception.”

“What do you mean by spiritual perception?”

“The power to perceive spiritual values,” said Willoughby, smiling. “It’s an old truth. ‘Unless you become as little children ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.’ ‘How hard it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.’ It’s an eternal tendency. Of course it is not impossible for a rich man to enter. But wealth, either wealth in possession or in civilized luxury, or material knowledge, does make one liable to lose something. Think of the typical American capitalist!”

“After all, every religion has felt this—not only Catholicism. What the modern generation doesn’t see is that it hasn’t thrown over religion because it has gained something: it has thrown over religion because it has lost something—just as a nation can lose an artistic sense.”

“But surely,” said David, “surely where you get the Catholic religion in complete control you always find backwardness, laziness, cruelty, crime. Look at Spain or South America—or Russia, for that matter. You can’t deny, in the main, that the mark of

Roman Catholicism has been to keep back education and progress. It seems to me, as a general verdict, beyond doubt."

"Well, let's admit that, though it isn't by any means a proved conclusion. It's not easy to set national values, and you must always remember the truth about losing the religious sense through materialism, which we've just been discussing. But I'm not going for a moment to deny the evils and corruptions of the Church in various lands. I think they've been exaggerated. Read Bernard Shaw on the Inquisition, for instance, in his preface to *St. Joan*. No one will accuse him of Catholic bias. However, let us freely admit these corruptions, allowing for the fact that a materially backward people are more likely to retain their religious sense. The answer is that the human side of the Church has often been appallingly corrupt. There have been ecclesiastics in all ages and races who have been greedy for power, and there has certainly been a tendency for the narrowest people, the most obscurantist and intolerant minds, to get control of ecclesiastical affairs. And yet, with all these odds against her, the

Church hasn't gone under. She has lived to reform her own abuses."

"She would persecute again if she got the chance."

"Most religions have persecuted if they got the chance. The English Church hasn't an altogether clean record. Nor have the Puritans. We've all made martyrs as well as owned them."

"So you put down all the corruptions and the persecutions to human beings?"

"Yes—to their free will."

"Then I'm hanged if I can see how you are to judge whether one religion is better or worse than another, if it produces so many corrupt people."

"It doesn't produce them: it's at their mercy. My dear chap, we must come back to the difficult truth which I suggested last night. We must judge a religion as a religion, apart from the way it has been carried out by its adherents. It's not impossible to do this, and yet people never will. Suppose you judged Christianity by Christians. You wouldn't get a very fair idea of the splendid ideals for which it stands, would you? In

other words it's grossly inaccurate to judge Christianity, Catholic or Protestant, by the people who don't carry out its maxims. You might as well judge a Beethoven sonata by the performance of a beginner who was playing it all wrong. You can judge it by a performer who does it justice, and you can judge Catholicism by its saints. And if you are comparing it with another religion, as we are doing, you must compare its principles rather than the way in which they have been worked out. You compare Beethoven with Handel, not by their performers, but on their own intrinsic merits. If you can't play, and so judge for yourself, you can at least test them by the best performances of both. In other words, you can tell whether the Catholic religion is a truer religion than Protestantism by examining it as such, by living it and seeing for yourself : or you can judge it, not in what you consider to be the most backward and corrupt countries, but in the most enlightened."

"Let's do that," said David.

"Very well : let's do that."

II

“Remember that if you choose to put the Latin countries low down in the scale, you will find the Catholic religion gaining ground and holding ground in countries which you would, I suppose, call enlightened. Take France : France rejected the Catholic religion, but the Church is immensely stronger than she was thirty years ago. Take Teutonic Austria and South Germany and the Rhineland—Catholic to the core. Take the Catholic Revival in Holland. Take Catholicism in Anglo-Saxon America. I am perfectly certain that if you look at Europe to-day, you will find that the only religion which is winning converts and showing unflagging evidences of vitality is the Catholic religion. In other words, with the exception perhaps of the Scandinavian countries, the Catholic religion has shown that there are no national conditions to which it cannot adjust itself.

“Now let’s take the other side of the picture. We needn’t bother about Protestantism as such, because that has lost ground and is losing ground almost everywhere. Even in Scotland, it isn’t holding the young gener-

ation. But leave that aside, in case you think I've made too sweeping a statement. After all, we are concerned with England and the English Church. Now what has been the practical effect of trying to run a special kind of religion, half-Catholic and half-Protestant, to be known as Anglicanism? Because that is what I think your idea is, and that is certainly the idea of the ordinary Anglican authorities."

"Yes—well, the Church of England has answered quite well. It's held its ground. It's only when people like our new Vicar come along and——"

"But has it? Let's come down to practical tests. How many men go to church, to an Anglican church nowadays? What is the proportion of men who actively profess the Church of England religion—is it even one in fifty?"

"Is it any higher in Catholic countries?"

"Much higher, I should say. But that's not the point. You must remember that the point of view you are putting forward is that the Anglican religion is a better one than the Catholic. That is its *raison d'être*.

Now I want entirely to allow for the fact that only a certain proportion of men ever develop a keen religious sense, and that an age of mechanical luxury isn't an atmosphere in which any religious sense thrives. But those factors don't seem to me to account for the almost total collapse of moderate Anglicanism, which is your half-Catholic, half-Protestant ideal. And, after all, it has had immense opportunities. For a number of generations it has had complete control of the Public Schools and Universities: it has had the upper-classes and upper middle-classes entirely under its tutelage. And yet hardly a man of the upper classes, except the very diminishing number who seek Orders, is a keen and active supporter of the Church of England. How much enthusiasm for religion do you find in an average Public School? Take the moderate Anglican churches to-day: my experience is that, on the average, they are almost empty of young people. The only English churches where you find any enthusiasm and energy among men as well as women, except when there is an unusually strong personality at work, are the Anglo-

Catholic and Evangelical churches. Anglicanism as a distinct religion, from the point of view of influence, seems to me to have failed more signally in the last fifty years than any other English religion."

"Well, that's a large statement," said David. "I'm not in a position to know. I don't get about enough to know."

"But here, in your village, what was the record of the church with the younger people? Did they come? Were they really keen? What about yourself? Except as an institution, has the Church of England religion aroused your keen enthusiasm?"

"Oh—but then I'm not religious."

"No, but you're the normal type of moderate Anglican layman. They none of them are keen, except towards the Church of England as a conservative institution, when schools or endowments are threatened. There's not a scrap of real religious fervour in moderate Anglicanism, so far as I can see; not a reflection of what you get in either Evangelical Protestantism or in Catholicism."

"Aren't you the one now who is going very much on the personal argument," said David,

“judging results by the character of the members?”

Willoughby laughed. “Yes, I am,” he answered. “I’ll switch off. I only wanted to drive home the fact that as a *via media* experiment, moderate Anglicanism doesn’t seem, on the practical test, to have justified itself.”

“But has Catholicism?”

“Yes, I think it has: it hasn’t held the irreligious, but it just keeps the moderately indifferent, and, what is most significant, it satisfies the keenly religious. But we will get away from the practical and personal test, and look at the doctrinal side. I agree that is the more important test—or, at any rate, it is easier to gauge.

“My contention is that, from the point of view of a *via media* religion Anglicanism won’t work and it doesn’t work. The reason the English Church is strong as a body is that she has not kept, or been able to keep to this *via media* principle. She’s felt her way back to full Protestantism in one direction, and full Modernism in another, and she’s feeling her way to full Catholicism in yet another.

She can't stop at moderate Catholicism. It is like the steep edge of a cliff. If you begin to climb at all you can't possibly stop till you get to the top. There isn't a final resting place half-way. That is why it's hopeless for the Bishops to suppose that the Anglo-Catholic Movement can stop at modifications, at Reservation without Benediction, at strictly regulated mention of the Saints without invocation. They have to allow now what they wouldn't have allowed a generation ago. The official Anglican line is not a natural one : it's artificial, and it's shifting. There's a sort of spiritual urge towards a fully developed Catholicism if you try to be Catholic at all."

"Then you mean that you have to go back wholesale to Roman Catholicism?"

"We'll deal with the Roman issue another time. But I do mean that ultimately there can't be a fixed Anglican Catholicism which stops short at certain points of the fully developed religion of the rest of the Church. It isn't a possible rôle for the English Church to take."

"But damn it all, Willoughby, you don't want to try and foist an Italian religion on us,

do you? That's why I object so to Roman Catholicism. It isn't—well it doesn't somehow strike one as clean and English."

Willoughby sat back and laughed. "I'm glad you said that," he remarked. "I'm glad you've said that. Because the last thing I want in the world is a Catholicism here which isn't English. I'm English to the backbone."

III

The telephone bell rang in the hall, and David went out. "All right, to-morrow," Willoughby heard his host say. "Come round to-morrow. What an hour to ring up!" he remarked as he came back. "I'm sure telephones kill the religious instinct."

"They certainly give an opportunity for Christian long-suffering. Why not unhook the receiver after 11 p.m.?"

"Oh, I don't know," said David. "Anything might happen. Besides I very rarely get a call so late as this."

"What it is to live in the country!" Willoughby sighed.

David resettled himself in his chair and

reached for the whisky. "You were saying," he observed, "that you wanted an English religion. What kind of Catholicism would that be? Isn't that a *via media*?"

"No: that's just what it isn't. Take German Catholicism: it's healthy, virile, quite un-Italian. I want to see English Catholicism as English as German Catholicism is German. That's exactly the rôle for a national religion—national to a point and yet not a modification. The fatal thing about Anglo-Catholicism will be if it remains a modification. People already talk in an unhealthy way of 'extremes.' There can't be extremes if you're fully developed."

"But the whole system is un-English, surely? I mean, submission to authority, having to cave in to everything the priests tell you, an Index of books you mustn't read, a hard-cut creed which you've got to accept—it's all a sort of mental slavery. That's the sort of impression I have in mind about the Catholic religion. It may be very good for simple-minded, primitive people—but not for free Englishmen."

"And yet," said Willoughby, "the very

developments, the very method by which the body of Catholic faith and practice has been built up is precisely the opposite to what you say. Authority comes through the corporate consciousness of the whole Church, and to create this consciousness the individuals have had to use all their intelligence and mental energy. Catholic authority is simply the fruit of intelligent thinking inspired by the Holy Spirit. Could there be a more democratic or enlightened process than a General Council? The people who reject the Catholic Faith are really reactionaries who are saying that a revelation and a worship which has been the conscious movement and action of the great progressive nations of the world has gone all wrong. It is really saying that human consciousness and human credulity is so faulty that it has gone completely astray. Well, personally, I am not so pessimistic about human intelligence as that."

"Yes, I daresay. But what about the Index and all that sort of priestly discipline?"

"The Index is a policy which the Roman Catholic Church has seen fit to adopt. Like all policies it may be wise or unwise. It

depends, I suppose, very much on the particular national characteristics and their needs. But the Index isn't by any means a rule which educated Roman Catholics are to be considered bound by. It's a very elastic rule."

Willoughby paused and drained his glass. "All this disciplinary idea," he continued, "all this impression about the Catholic obscurantism and superstition and priestcraft and childish discipline—it's a very unfair impression. The Church works, not only in her doctrine, but in her discipline, through the consciousness and the hard thinking of her own people—on the human side. I want you to consider this human process of building up through thinking, of developing rules through consciousness of the need of them, of the whole body of the Church actively responding to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That's the Catholic idea—a corporate action in which everyone has to take his share, and not a mere autocracy which inflicts itself on Catholics by its own iron junker will."

Willoughby paused. "I'm not denying," he said, "that there has been an ultra-

conservative tendency in Rome particularly, and that in the ecclesiastic there has been a proclivity to the obscurantist type. But this is passing. The Church will be jarred into action once more by the useful criticism and hostility of those outside. The cleverest and the most mentally active people have usually been opposed to religion.

“ It’s no good our thinking the Church of England is any better. The true free-thinker laughs at your Anglican modernist. Anglicanism—I mean moderate Anglicanism—is very, very clerical. It is a religion almost entirely of parsons. It’s tone is parsonical. It’s a pity because the English clergy are a good type. Yet, in spite of the fact that Anglicanism has tried to avoid making their clergy a caste, by abolishing the Catholic rule of celibacy—just think how the average Englishman regards the parson ! With respect ? Why, the very word ‘ parson ’ suggests a note of contempt. The Englishman is only less anti-clerical than the continental Freemason because the English clergy have never ventured to be so aggressive as the continental clergy. But when there is an issue—take divorce, for

instance—well, you go among a number of professing, but average, English Church laymen, and hear their remarks about the attitude of their own Church on the subject ! ”

David replied irrelevantly.

“ The sort of impression I got at school and at Oxford,” he said, “ was that Catholicism was simply a form of Christianity which had become paganized. It had soaked up the religions it was trying to convert. Surely a lot of Catholic rites and ideas are simply taken from heathen cults.”

“ I should have thought that was a strong argument in favour of the Catholic religion,” said Willoughby, “ unless you are going to take the very narrow and intolerant view that there is no truth in pagan revelations. If you allow that they are comparatively true, it is only right that Catholicism should incorporate what is true in them. You have mentioned what seems to me one of the most convincing outward proofs of the Catholic Church, that she hasn’t presented a religion which is unconnected with other religions, but rather that she is the sum of them. She contains all the truth they have to offer, just

as all constructive Protestant theology is part of the Catholic Faith."

IV

There was a further pause. The fire sank lower. Willoughby began to look at the clock.

"I'm beginning to get awfully sleepy again," he said. "I'm awfully sorry. I only wonder I haven't made you sleepy with my incessant talk."

David didn't respond. His face was glued towards the dying fire. "And yet," he remarked, as though he were answering himself, "I feel we have talked rather round and round the subject. We don't seem to have reached anywhere definite."

"It's too large a subject. We've only been skirmishing over objections—outposts to the issue."

"Yes, I suppose so. I suppose that is why I still feel there must be some deeper reason why we Englishmen distrust Rome so much. It's in our bones."

"I haven't been speaking from the Roman

standpoint," said Willoughby. "I make the distinction between Papal policy and English Catholicism. I don't think it's difficult to trace the causes for that distrust. From the time of Elizabeth the Papal claim, and therefore the Roman Catholic religion, was associated indelibly in the English mind with something hostile and foreign. It *was* hostile and foreign. The Spanish Armada was blessed by the Pope. A return to Papal obedience meant the Spanish conquest of England. It set up a national complex, and the complex dies hard. It has affected all our work of Catholic revival. It is affecting you. You are mixing up, just as much as anyone else, the political and the religious side."

"And yet, on the purely religious side, look how everywhere definitely educated opinion is anti-Catholic."

"And just as anti-Anglican, except when the English Church becomes impotent. No, we come back to that supreme fact—you can't find religion by reason. The cleverer you are, or rather, the more you rely only on reason, the more you tend to blunt your intuitive, your spiritual sense."

“And isn’t that a condemnation of religion?”

Willoughby jumped up and stretched out his arms. “No, not a bit,” he cried. “Reason and common-sense are excellent faculties as checks, and also as guides in the exact and the demonstrable sciences—sciences where you are dealing with physical facts. But the spiritual sense is an infinitely greater faculty.”

“Well, yes,” said David looking up at him, “perhaps so.”

“Perhaps! Take love. Which is really of more value—the power to love, or the power to multiply decimals? The power to make your mother smile, or the power to put her tears in a glass-bottle and analyse them?”

David rose too. “I think you’re right there,” he said.

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CHAPTER VI

THIRD EVENING—THE PAPAL PROBLEM

I

AFTER dinner on the next evening David suddenly announced an innovation in the performance.

They had been out riding across Gallingham Common, where the gorse lay a blackened mass as a result of a large fire last summer. There was a touch of frost in the air as they came home. The stars were out, and the sky was clear, and a new moon rose gently over the horizon. The fire burned crisply as they sat beside it at tea, and Willoughby felt an additional vigour in his blood.

"I've asked in Hawkins, the doctor, this evening," said David. "It was he who rang me up last night. He's a very intelligent chap. I want him to join in our discussion."

"Won't he be bored?"

"Oh no, not a bit. The fact is, I want

him to contribute his point of view. He's a Roman Catholic."

Willoughby's face clouded over.

"Oh, I don't know that I want to embark on a controversy with a Roman Catholic," he remarked. "It will be much pleasanter to talk about ordinary affairs."

"I hope you won't be annoyed with me," David continued, "but I asked him deliberately. He knows your views, and I want to hear his criticism and hear you answer him."

Willoughby was silent.

"You're not annoyed, are you?"

Willoughby laughed. "Oh no, I'm not annoyed; but I don't know whether I appreciate a three-sided discussion, or of being turned on, as it were, to a fight in an arena in front of you. It seems to me a little to disturb the general line of our conversation. Your friend has his ideas, and I have mine. We shan't convince each other. But just as you like."

"Well, if you don't mind awfully, I shall be glad. You see, so far as I understand it, you have been arguing all along for Roman Catholic principles. I want to see where you

Anglo-Catholics differ. I want to understand why you're not Roman Catholics. You said that you would tackle the Roman issue sooner or later."

"Oh yes, we've got to do that. Very well, then, I'll enter the lists with Hawkins. I hope he isn't bitterly controversial."

"He's quite a nice chap, and distinctly clever."

"Much too clever for me, I expect. But I'm glad he's nice."

Dr. Hawkins arrived strictly to the hour of half-past seven. He was a youngish man of forty, with country tastes, but evidently a vigorous, alert mind, and eminently of the practical type which dislikes theories. Mrs. Lyall seemed especially well-disposed towards him. Willoughby found himself wondering what kind of affinity she found in the doctor. He himself had always been a little disconcerted with her grave politeness and her rather heavy dignity. He felt that she indisputably reigned in the home, and he was always afraid lest somehow or other he would stumble into doing the wrong thing.

After dinner came the usual interval of

light talk and coffee in the drawing-room. And then the three men apologetically withdrew. Willoughby wondered what contribution Mrs. Lyall would have made to the discussion. He almost regretted that she was not to be admitted to form a fourth.

II

Directly they had reached the study, poured out the drinks, and settled down, David began.

"What I want to know," he said, "is the difference between the Anglo-Catholics and the Roman Catholics. I want to hear the opinion of each about the other. I want to know what you, Hawkins, think of the Anglicans, and I want to know what you, Willoughby, think of the Papists. I'm not at all clear why you aren't a Roman Catholic straight out. So I shall sit by and listen. Hawkins, you fire away, and tell us your opinions of the Anglo-Catholic Movement. You know Willoughby's position."

"It all sounds very cold-blooded," said Willoughby smiling. "Lyall, are you the judge or the jury?"

Dr. Hawkins, however, did not smile. "I am afraid I can't give an opinion of Mr. Willoughby's position," he remarked, "because frankly, it is incomprehensible to me. If we are to thrash these questions out, we must not mind straight speaking. What I can't understand is how you people, having persecuted and martyred us through your Elizabethan ancestors, now proceed to imitate us and to do—to pretend to do—exactly the things which you put our priests to death for doing. My contention is simply this : you can't have the Catholic religion without the Catholic Church, and you can't have the Catholic Church without the Pope. It seems to me you people want to get the privileges of the Catholic religion without having to pay the price for it. You want to be Catholics without the trouble of being converted. And it can't be done."

"I think," said Willoughby, "that I had better at once make my own position plain as regards this issue. Otherwise we shall be tilting at ninepins. And what I want to make quite clear is this : I entirely refuse to regard Anglo-Catholicism as a sort of rival show to

Roman Catholicism, so that you look at the samples of each and make your choice. That, from my standpoint, is entirely a wrong attitude. It is not the attitude I am taking. No ; the position, as I see it, is this. The Anglo-Catholic Movement, as it is called, is simply a corporate movement of the English Church back towards the full Catholic profession which she lost. The Church of England is an entity—several entities perhaps. You must regard her as an entity. You can no more compare this development of the English Church with the Roman Catholic religion than you can compare an individual person's religious development with a religious system."

"But the Church of England—or your Anglo-Catholic movement—is a religious system."

"No," said Willoughby, "that is precisely what it isn't. It's a corporate individuality feeling its way back to a religion."

"I can't understand that idea."

"I can," said David, "and I think Willoughby is right. But what religion is it feeling its way to? Don't say the Catholic

religion—that's too vague. Is it the Roman Catholic religion, or isn't it?"

"I don't see why I need answer that question," Willoughby answered. "My answer would only be my personal view of ultimate developments, a prophecy which may turn out to be quite false. I can't tell you absolutely what is going to happen eventually."

Dr. Hawkins made an exclamation of impatience. "This is an impossible theory," he said. "The Church of England is a system, with a Prayer Book and a definite religious outlook which is anti-Catholic."

"Queer to find a Roman Catholic saying that Anglicanism is more definite than an Anglican claims it to be," Willoughby murmured. "However, I'll agree that this corporate individual is quite definite in his fundamental religious views. He is working from a certain basis. And, as for the Prayer Book, if you like to claim that it is anti-Catholic, I can simply answer that this corporate individuality made the Prayer Book, and what he made, he can alter."

"You certainly are frank in allowing that your Church is nebulous," said the doctor,

“so nebulous that you don’t know where she is going, and——”

“I didn’t say she was nebulous. The fact that she is able to develop, and to recover, seems to me to be just the opposite of nebulous. Development and growth argue definiteness. If there is growth there must be something definite to grow.”

“What is this going to grow into? That’s what I want to know,” David repeated.

III

There was a moment’s pause. Willoughby deliberately filled his pipe.

“I began by making a statement,” he said, “in order to prevent our tilting at nine-pins. I mean by that that I don’t want to waste your time in letting you attack something I’m not maintaining. Now I think I had better make a further statement.”

“Fire ahead,” cried David.

“Well, then, I want to insist on the fact that the Church of England is an individual entity, an individual who is growing and

undergoing changes. At the Reformation she underwent a change."

"You're not going to claim that the Established Church is the same entity as the pre-Reformation Church in England?" cried Dr. Hawkins.

"I certainly do. But, as that doesn't affect my argument in the least, we will assume that she began at the Reformation. Since then she has undergone changes. She dropped certain Catholic practices and beliefs, she separated from the main body of Western development, she was cut off from the rest of the Catholic Church. Well, what she has done, she can undo, like any other individual. Just as an individual can feel his way back to the full Catholic religion, from your point of view, by degrees—so can she. That's all I mean."

Dr. Hawkins became exceedingly animated. "Here's the flaw in your argument," he cried. "From a Catholic point of view no religious body can have life, real life, until it has become Catholic, until it has submitted to the Catholic Church. When your Church has submitted to the Holy See, then we can talk about individuals and living entities.

Until then she's simply a sect. It's the duty of every individual within her who believes in the Catholic religion to leave her and join the Catholic Church. The Anglican Establishment isn't a live body. You must leave her."

"What I don't understand," David remarked, "is how far you apply this idea of individuals simply remaining in the corporate body and working along with it. For instance, if I were a Wesleyan, would you tell me that I should remain Wesleyan until the Wesleyan body had worked back to the Catholic truth?"

"That's a very intelligent argument," said Willoughby. "No, I shouldn't tell a Wesleyan that, because I don't believe Wesleyanism possesses the sacramental life. I believe the Church of England does."

"But she doesn't," cried Dr. Hawkins. "Obviously she doesn't."

"I believe that obviously she does," said Willoughby gravely. "And that is, of course, a fundamental difference between us. I agree that anyone who ceases to believe that the English Church possesses the sacraments ought obviously to leave her."

“But,” Hawkins persisted, “even that is not enough. Suppose your Church had preserved the Sacraments—a supposition which I will allow for the sake of argument—you would still have no right to remain in her. Your body would still be in schism, because she is not in communion with the Holy See.”

“That’s the worst of you Anglo-Catholics,” he continued, after a moment. “You seem to imagine that valid Orders are everything. They wouldn’t help you in the least, if you had them, if you were still in schism. The moment your Church repudiated the Papal claims—I’m assuming for a moment your own continuity theory—that moment she ceased to be part of the Catholic Church and to be a live Catholic body.”

“It’s a great satisfaction that we have at last got down to the real issue,” Willoughby remarked. “Here we are indeed at the crossways. Lyall, you can’t complain now that you don’t know why the Anglo-Catholic Movement isn’t Roman. We say you can have Catholic life and Catholic truth without necessarily accepting the Papal claims, and Dr. Hawkins and his friends say we can’t.

We say that the Church of England, whether her motives were good or bad, whether the practical results were beneficial or disastrous, only exercised a power she had, in the last resort, the right to use—namely that of saying to the Holy See, ‘Very well, we must go on without you, independently.’ Now which of us is right, Dr. Hawkins or I? For here you have the whole case between England and Rome in a nut-shell.”

“Yes, which is right?” said David. “I’m waiting to hear.”

“Well,” Willoughby continued, “I suppose that when you come to a fundamental disagreement of principle the only way to proceed is to examine how the principles practically work out. I don’t know that in a single evening, by mere argument, without books or authorities at our elbow, we can very well proceed theoretically. And the practical test is a very fair one, I think, because if—on Dr. Hawkins’ theory—all bodies which are outside the Roman Catholic Church are outside the Catholic Church, then they ought to show it. Doctor, don’t you agree there?”

“Yes, I agree,” said Hawkins.

“Very well. Then the case of the East becomes vitally important ; for the East did what we Anglicans did five hundred years later. The East claimed the power to continue as the Catholic Church without the Pope. Do the Eastern Churches show signs of spiritual death ? I know general impressions of large bodies, such as nations or Churches, are dangerous. But they are not necessarily inaccurate. And what I say is this : no unprejudiced mass can look at the great Churches of Russia, of Greece, of the Armenians, of the Copts, or the Syrians—and say they have ceased to be Catholic. They have suffered untold persecution : they still survive. They haven’t lost their doctrinal continuity, they haven’t lost their sacramental continuity ; they’ve survived. Every outward, practical test which we rightly apply to the Latin Church when we claim that she is the Catholic Church of Christ, seems to me to apply in their case. They haven’t, like the Protestants, ceased to believe in Catholic Sacraments. They haven’t supposed that the Church went all wrong for a certain period and so had to go back to a supposed primitive order. They’ve

preserved every kind of continuity. One of my reasons for not being a Roman Catholic is that all the facts seem to me to point against the claim of un-churching the East."

David gave a generous helping of log to the fire. "We are getting farther to-night than we've got yet," he remarked. "I really am beginning to understand your point of view, Willoughby."

"I agree with the ground you've chosen as a test," said the doctor. "I'll accept it. I agree that the Eastern Churches have survived through ages of persecution, and haven't altered. The reason is that they, unlike your Church, have kept the Sacraments. Their Orders are valid. But they haven't altered, they haven't developed—that's just it. They have stagnated. They are corrupt, and in some few cases, actually heretical. They show no energy, no powers of extending their development. I am not sure that the Church of Russia will even survive the Bolshevik persecution. Where is their foreign missionary activity? It's minute. You talked, just now, of an unprejudiced man applying practical tests. Well, I claim that no unprejudiced

man could look at the Church of Rome and the Orthodox Church, and could fail to see that it has crystallized while Rome has developed. The Easterns are exactly as they were when they broke off. Unlike the Protestants, they have held their ground ; that's because they have the sacraments. They have never extended their growth ; and that's because they have broken away from the Catholic Church."

" I don't agree with you in certain details," said Willoughby, " but I'm prepared to accept your general conclusion. I agree that their survival and presentation is due to their sacramental life—so that you can have sacramental life without being in communion with Rome. But——"

" Oh, well, anyone knows that," cried the Doctor. " We admit their Orders."

" One moment. Let me go on, please. I'm also prepared to agree that, through breaking away from the West, from Rome, they have lost a certain vitality—what I should call their corporate consciousness hasn't been stirred to any growth of doctrinal or devotional activity. I am even prepared, in a sense, to

go thus far. I should say that undoubtedly the Roman Catholic Church is the main body. She possesses a certain virility and power which no-one else possesses. And what you point to is the result of their severance with the body."

"That's a big admission," David remarked.

"Well, it's important," said Willoughby, "and I'm speaking strictly from my own personal belief. The difference between our positions is, in this sense, a comparative one. You agree to say the main body is the Church, the complete Church. I say that any body which preserves the sacramental life, so long as it doesn't drift into heresy, is a part of the Church, though it may be an outer degree, as it were, of the Church. I admit that it may not be part of the main body of the Church. The difference is where we draw the boundaries of the Church, rather than a difference of the actual geography. Incidentally, I believe my claim is much more evidentially reasonable, because I think your Church also bears marks of being a part, rather than a whole. There has been development, as one would expect from a main body, but it has been develop-

ment rather in one direction—in the direction of spiritual autocracy. But I don't know that this is particularly important to our purpose."

"What justifications have you for being separate from the main body?" asked David.

"The justification from which I began. The justification of being a living entity because like the East, we've preserved the sacramental life. It's our duty, of course, to do what we can to heal the division. But if we are a live body we do it corporately, and not by separate personal action. There's our Anglican claim in a nut-shell."

"Yes, I see," said David. "But I think your answer is incomplete."

"It's very incomplete," remarked the doctor grimly.

"Wait a moment," said David. "I want to express my feeling about it. I want to get it into words. Have some more whisky, you fellows."

IV

Presently David continued.

"I see your position up to a point," he

declared. "But I don't see what prevents you, at once, as a corporate body, joining the Church of Rome. I can understand that all corporate movements move slowly. It took a long time to get the Army to do anything. But what really stands in the way of your going back to Rome?"

"Something," Willoughby answered, "which has happened since the break. Otherwise there wouldn't have been any great difficulty if both sides had been wiser. We, on our side, deplore the fact that we broke off. The Roman Catholics may have denied our actual right to break off, our inherent power to remain an actual entity, that is in spite of having broken off. But the past wouldn't, I suppose, necessarily interfere with reunion. Once, as a Church, or even as a movement within the English Church, we had found our way back to a full Catholic profession, and frankly admitted that the schism was a deplorable theory, there might not otherwise have been any fundamental difficulties. But there is now a fundamental difficulty."

Dr. Hawkins fidgeted in his seat. "One moment," he said. "I am afraid you are

assuming too much and ignoring other obstacles. You are assuming that all this time you have retained your Sacramental life and are in the position of the separated Eastern Churches. But you aren't. Your Orders are invalid. I must remind you that you are exactly in the same position as the Presbyterians."

"How do you prove the Church of England has Orders?" David asked.

"Well, of course, I should be prepared to advance all sorts of reasons, doctrinal, historical, practical reasons. Practically, I don't see how the Catholic Revival could have begun and continued and progressed, if we hadn't sacramental vitality. If a man appears to be dead and then shows signs of coming to life again, it is evidence to me that he can't ever have been dead."

"What do other people think?" David asked; "outside authorities, I mean."

"Most of the Eastern Churches have fully considered and have now agreed that we have valid Orders."

"That's important," said David.

"I doubt if even your own Church claims to have Orders," cried the doctor. "Your

Prayer Book doesn't claim to have a sacrificing priesthood."

"That I entirely dispute," Willoughby answered. "But even if you proved your point it wouldn't necessarily prove that we hadn't Orders. A Church might have preserved Orders without knowing it—it's just possible, though I suppose the intention would be absent and so invalidate it. Anyhow, it's significant that the English Church has always insisted on the ordination of Nonconformist ministers before they could take office, whereas she has never reordained your priests or Eastern priests."

"That only proves you have Anglican Orders, not Catholic Orders," said Dr. Hawkins.

"Anyhow," Willoughby continued, "I'm not sure we need go on discussing the Orders question. Because it doesn't enter into the issue which Lyall has raised—the question why we don't corporately go back to Rome. If the Orders were the sole obstacle, it ought not to be impossible to find some remedy which would neither involve you in accepting our Orders; or involve us in denying them. For instance, we might agree to reordination, or

we might arrange to have all future Bishops consecrated by one Eastern Bishop, so that, in the course of two or three generations, we should have valid Orders, even from your point of view."

"With a new valid Ordinal?"

"Oh yes, with a new Ordinal, so long as we didn't deny our old one. But these are side-issues. Our real difficulty is that, since the breach, you, on your side, have developed the Papal claims to a further degree. You have promulgated the doctrine of Papal Infallibility."

"It's not a new doctrine."

"It's a new article of faith, which didn't exist up to 1870. It's a development and it's a very distinct and very extended development."

"I don't quite see with all your theories about a main body of development," said David, "how you justify drawing the line at this one."

"It doesn't answer the test I named of a Western development, against which the East at least doesn't actively protest. The East does most actively protest against the whole Papal development. And the test seems to

be an inevitable one, unless, like the doctor here, you are prepared to rule out the whole of the Eastern Churches, and to say that the Roman Catholic Communion is, not merely the main body, but the complete Catholic Church."

"Besides," Willoughby continued, "I'm not prepared to rule out this doctrine altogether. I don't say that Papal Infallibility is an insuperable obstacle. The fact that it is a gradual Western development means that, from the point of view I am maintaining, it ought to be very carefully and cautiously considered. I have my own ideas about it."

"Well," remarked the doctor, "that's typically Anglican again. You can't even give a definite 'yes' or 'no' about your attitude as to the Papal claims."

Willoughby relit his pipe.

"The reason for that happens to be, not Anglican uncertainty, but Roman uncertainty. It's your theologians who can't apparently be definite as to what Papal Infallibility means. Does it mean that the Pope can promulgate a doctrine without ascertaining and representing the mind of the Church through a Council

or by some other means? Or can he only speak as representing the mind of the Church? The answer makes all the difference, and we haven't got the answer. Your people haven't decided. If it means that the Pope can speak *ex cathedra* independently of the mind of the Church, then that is sheer autocracy. It cuts across the whole conception of the Catholic principle of authority, as we understand it. It destroys the whole idea of an unfolding corporate consciousness which is, it seems to me, the sane, the reasonable, the strong proof of Catholic inspiration. You change all that and you produce the eminently human error of a one-man dictatorship, the method by which so many human inventions have run to seed. It's so fatally easy. If the other interpretation is true, and the Pope speaks because he is representing this corporate mind, then it's a very different proposition."

"This corporate mind idea is very vague and uncertain," said the doctor, glancing at his watch. "It's all very vague and indefinite—I distrust it because of that."

"Odd how we differ in outlook. I distrust infinitely more something which is so clear-

cut and theoretically codified. It's so easy to codify and be exact that it suggests artificial invention. Truth doesn't come by Delphic oracles : it requires the labour of picking one's way over a stony road. Besides I'm not sure that theory doesn't frequently give way to practice. Theoretically the Vatican doesn't recognize the Quirinal. Actually it accepts the Italian occupation. However, that's a side issue."

"You said you had your own ideas about the Papal claims," David remarked.

"Oh yes, just my own ideas. I think the evolution of Papal supremacy is a perfectly natural development, obviously practical and desirable. You must have a head-quarters. I'm prepared to go even further, myself, I'm prepared to agree that the development is the result of supernatural inspiration, that it's a legitimate Catholic development, in fact—that the Papacy is a divine institution, in a sense. I mean that as it met a human need, it received Divine sanction. But I'm not prepared to say that it was an inevitable development of revelation—that the Divine sanction could not have worked out in other

ways. There seems to me a certain unmistakable human element about it, which has received Divine sanction, but which might not have happened if the human demand had happened to be framed differently. I couldn't put it, that is, on the basis, let's say, of the Trinity."

"I'm afraid I don't understand you in the least," said the doctor, rising. "But I must go. I must be home in good time. I've got a heavy day's work in front of me to-morrow."

The other two men rose.

"Good night," said the doctor to Willoughby. "We haven't got very far in our discussion, I'm afraid. But you can't in a discussion. You will come over to us one day. One day perhaps you will receive the gift of Faith."

"Unfaith, I should have said," Willoughby replied smiling.

"Well, I won't argue. But I don't mean unfaith, I mean the gift of Faith. Then it will all be made plain."

"In order to become a Roman Catholic, I must cease to believe in the Anglican position. That is the main difference between us. Therefore I must receive a gift of unfaith."

"Well, well," said the Doctor, "I must go. Good night, Lyall. Thanks for a very instructive evening. No thanks, I won't have any more."

v

David came back after an interval of seeing the doctor to the door and into his car. Willoughby was standing with his back to the fire.

"Sit down again," said David. "It's quite early. There's no need to think of going to bed yet."

"I'm awfully ashamed of pleading tired, but I am."

"Well, perhaps it's wiser. We've got another evening. I say, I'm glad I brought in Hawkins. It has helped me to understand your position much more."

"How exactly?"

"Well—it seems an odd thing to say perhaps. But I realized, when you were up against him, that your Catholic Movement is much more English than I thought—if

you don't mind my putting it that way. I think you make a mistake in not emphasizing your English characteristics enough. We outsiders don't realize that it is a regularly English movement. It—it makes one sympathize much more. I trust it more."

Willoughby smiled. "You've been the instructor, David, to-night," he said, "and a very good one too."

"I don't know about that. I suppose I'm frightfully English and all that, but I do believe our English ways and our English character have an awful lot in them that is better than any of the foreign methods. It sounds awfully insular and narrow. But it's deep down in my bones. I trust English ways more. Anyhow, for the English you need to be an English movement. And I'm beginning to think your movement is."

"You mean we just muddle through," said Willoughby laughing.

"No, I don't think I mean that. I don't believe that's a strong point in British character."

"You mean the national English determination to resist autocracy in any form?"

"Yes—yes, that's more what I'm driving at."

"It is a good British trait," said Willoughby. "One can laugh at the heroics of the patriotic poets and the Kingsleys, but the instinct of the Englishman not to sit down under aggression—to be a rebel in spirit against trickery and tyranny—has generally ensured that he's been on the right side; not always, but generally, I think. At least it's his contribution. And I quite agree with you. The Papal development you may place at the very highest value and say it is an absolutely necessary and legitimate claim. But, even if you do, it remains a peculiarly inviting system for autocracy to develop. There isn't the faintest doubt in my mind that the pre-Reformation English Church was very often most indignant with Papal political interference, and that the English instinct to resist that sort of thing was usually in the right. That's why Anglican Catholicism, whatever else it becomes, will always reflect the spirit of the English rebel against dictatorships and any sort of political absolutism in spiritual matters."

"Well, I'm glad you say that," observed David. "You ought to say it more often."

“It’s too easy to be too national,” said Willoughby. “But then, the whole problem of life is the art of steering between Scylla and Charybdis. Solve that and you’ve solved everything, so far as policy and action are concerned.”

CHAPTER VII

LAST EVENING—ANGLO-CATHOLIC PRETENSIONS

I

THE last evening did not develop quite as Willoughby had expected. Realities always evade our anticipations. For one thing, Mrs. Lyall became much more animated than usual in her conversation, and unbent a little from her usual regal dignity. This involved a prolonged attendance after dinner in the drawing-room, so prolonged indeed that Willoughby began to wonder if the usual programme would not have to be abandoned altogether. However, at a far later hour than on the former evenings, they eventually escaped to the study and began to settle down. But then the telephone rang—Willoughby wondered if this was a message from some delegate from the Eastern Church whom David had invited—and then the whisky was discovered to be insufficient and a new bottle had to be

found and opened. So that when, at last, everything had been attended to, there was not that atmosphere of detachment and quiet which seemed to be demanded in an enquiry of this nature.

David had shown odd little symptoms of nervous strain. These trifles had disturbed him. It was an obvious effort for him to adjust himself.

"I'm so sorry," he said apologetically. "Every infernal thing seems to have conspired to prevent our having our last talk. There were such lots of things I wanted to say, and now they're all gone out of my mind."

"Well, let me begin this time," Willoughby suggested. "I want to apologize too. I want to emphasize that if you are going to look into any kind of subject there are certain disadvantages in doing it by way of discussion. Reading avoids a good many of the disadvantages. A discussion is too personal."

"What exactly do you mean?"

"Well, I mean that in a discussion one's decision is very often affected by influences

which ought not really to count. I'm always noticing how much popular opinion is swayed, not by actual proofs or arguments, but by the little mannerisms of the person who is putting forward his case. If you are irritated by the mannerisms you are very apt to form your impressions of the case which is being presented accordingly. For instance, last night, I found myself becoming increasingly antagonistic to the doctor whenever he used such phrases as 'You will have to submit.' He's typical of so many English Roman Catholic controversialists. They seem to want to insist on obstacles rather than agreements, to want to make the possibilities of agreement as difficult as ever they can by an inherently arrogant tone. Of course, it's quite unreasonable to be affected by such things—their case is right or wrong independently of the manner in which it is presented. But it's human to be influenced in this way, and hence the disadvantage of discussion."

"Yes, I see what you mean. I suppose I've been affected by you on the same sort of lines. I thought you were too anti-English, until you talked last night."

Willoughby laughed. "I'm sure I'm an extraordinarily bad advocate," he remarked.

"Oh no. But here we are at our last evening, and I'm wondering how far we've got. We've wandered a long way from the original problem—the problem as to what I'm to do about the new Vicar here. I don't want him upsetting the place."

"Do you think he will?"

"I think he will irritate the older people. They dislike changes. I think I do too."

"Yes, of course. Though it's a sign of mental ageing. We ought not to age mentally, because we always have our wills to help us. If we are always on the look-out for that tendency, we can avoid it. There must be change, growth that is, if there's life. But I quite agree that the real difficulty the Catholic Movement has to meet is a difficulty, not of abstract theories, but of practical application. It's the difficulty, particularly in the villages, of knowing precisely what is the best and wisest way to behave. One can't lay down rules. One can only pray and believe that, in spite of fools and cranks and knaves, there is something supernatural about the Catholic religion

which will cause it ultimately to overcome all obstacles—and, of course, behave reasonably oneself.”

“You mean, not mind changes and upsets?”

“Growth needn’t mean upset. But certainly I mean not to oppose and suspect change merely because it is a change. The present order of Anglican service is itself the result of change. You would hardly recognize your village church if you were suddenly transported to a Sunday morning service in the time of your great-grandfather: or if you suddenly found yourself back before the Reformation. There must be changes, not necessarily violent changes, but growth.”

“Of course the real issue, after all,” David observed, “is whether your religion, your Movement, is the right one. If it is, the changes it involves are right. One must settle the larger question first.”

“Yes, you must.”

“And if it’s right, then it’s right for me. That’s what I have been trying to test it by. I can’t say I ever imagined I should have to come to consider such a question, I’ve been

rather annoyed at being dragged into this religious question at all. But how I act must depend on whether I believe the Catholic religion is right or wrong, and if I believe it's right then I've got to accept it myself, I suppose."

"Yes, your attitude must be determined by your convictions."

"But is it the best religion?" cried David. "It's so difficult to tell. We've talked, and I've heard you argue, and I quite allow you've got a case for working the Catholic religion through the English Church on English lines—and yet, I don't know. Is it better than the ordinary Anglican religion, or the Protestant religion? Is any one religion better really than another?"

"Religions are almost certain to be unequal. There is nothing more improbable than that all religions should be equally good. Men are not equal. Nature isn't equal in any aspect. On the contrary, the universe seems to be set in a system of degrees, degrees of strength, virility, intelligence and consciousness. Why should religions be the exception? There is almost certain to be the same feature

of degrees—and all religions are necessarily unequal.”

“ Yes, but which is the best ? ”

“ Well, we’ve talked over that. I can only repeat what I said to you before. I think you must look at religions impersonally—judge them by themselves in the abstract, as systems, rather than by the way their adherents carry them out. Judge them by their principles. Now I’ll just put to you two examples of how I believe the Catholic religion to be the greatest, the most obviously supernaturally inspired religion of all. I will take the Mass first, and I’m going to claim without the slightest hesitation that the Mass has somehow called out a greater degree of human devotion than any other service of any kind. Go to Mass in any of our churches, go to Mass in Westminster Cathedral, and you will see, in time—not at first, possibly—what I mean. There’s a different religious atmosphere, a far more intense religious atmosphere, which it is almost impossible for a normally spiritually developed person not to be conscious of. I remember in the War what a fellow, who used to go about to various services, but who

belonged to no religious body, told me. He said, 'When I hear Protestant services (he included the Church of England) I know they are man-made. They depend on the hymns the men choose, and the sermon the padre preaches, and the prayers he reads. It's all man-made, all a matter of personal selection and personal influence. When I go to Mass it's quite different. The thing happens, it doesn't matter whether the priest is a gentleman or isn't, or whether the men are devout or inattentive. Something happens apart from all that. And it isn't selected. It is just there and you've got to take it or leave it. And the curious thing is that, even though it isn't arranged, like the Protestant services, specially for the War, it blends much more with the Front than any of your Church of England or Dissenting shows. The one's real, the other somehow, isn't. The one's professional, the other's amateur.' Those were more or less his words, and the last words were actually his. They impressed me, and I remembered them.

"Well, that's that. And then in the Catholic religion, unlike any other, you have Con-

fession, regular Confession to a priest. Now this is a rule, which taken merely as a rule—apart from any consideration of sacramental grace—is going profoundly to affect a man's life, a boy's life, a woman's life. It means that a regular penitent on the eve of, certainly of any big, temptation is going to be pulled up by the thought, 'I shall have to confess that.' It means that at regular periods every Catholic penitent has to examine himself, to psycho-analyse himself if you like—but in a much healthier way, I should argue, than a good deal of psycho-analytical treatment. I doubt if there is any rule of life which goes down further into profound influences and makes more difference to character than this rule of confession. If we had Confession at our public schools I believe it would have an extraordinarily healthy influence. There are other rules, like that of going to Mass every Sunday and Obligation day, but this is the most intimate rule, perhaps of all.

“Now this is what I want to point out to you. There is no religion which is half so insistent in its demands. There is no religion, which, even on its minimum standard, goes

further to ensure a straight life—as far as rules, simply as rules, can—there is no religion which makes such great demands or digs in deeper to the very heart of individual conduct, than the Catholic religion. I ask you to make that comparison. The various forms of Protestant religion, the religion we have called the official ‘C. of E.’—none of them make such demands. Don’t misunderstand me. I don’t deny that they give tremendous opportunities which spiritually-minded people can use, and do use. But they aren’t an *essential* part of the religion ; you need not go to church at all on Sundays, you need not confess your sins ; it is left entirely to you, if you are a Protestant. I know quite well the possible dangers of a system of rules such as the Catholic religion makes ; the Church has appreciated the dangers of that system and has cut down the actual obligations to a minimum. But the advantages of a minimum system of obligations are enormous ; they mean that to break away requires a conscious effort, not a mere slackness. They mean that whereas the non-Catholic religions only appeal to, and only work satisfactorily with, people

who are already naturally religious, the Catholic religion takes in a wider scope and affects for good even those who, if they were not Catholics, would be nothing. It means that, instead of appealing only to a type, it is the only religion which will ever reach, and ever does reach, the average man."

"That's a terrific assertion."

"Yes, I know it is : but I make it deliberately. I am perfectly certain that no Protestant or Church of England religion could have held the masses of all the great nations of Europe : they haven't done so. Look at the results. A Catholic church is the only place where you will find the perfectly average, naturally rather unspiritual person. The other churches only hold the naturally spiritual."

"I've heard it said your Movement only attracts a type."

"As a Movement, in its earlier stages, that may be comparatively true. My test can only apply where you have the Catholic habit established in practice. And, so far as we are concerned, your best test is, accordingly, in our youth. I wish you could come down to our Scout camp. Spend a week there and

watch the effect on really rough, primitive types of boy. Take cases where the priest is inefficient or actually incompetent and unpopular. The boys who have learnt the Catholic habit go on with their religion : at the very lowest estimate, it takes much more for them to lapse. Other religions depend on personal influence, on the personal character of the clergyman and the adherent. But the Catholic religion, in practice, persists when these influences are absent. We do get the average in a way no other religion ever can. That's one argument the Protestants use against us ; they point to the presence of such people and they say, ' What a low average your religion results in ! ' The real conclusion is that we hold the low average and the others don't. Some Protestant religions get such people in waves of emotion ; but emotion means reaction, and the story of the reactions is often appalling. We are much more cold-blooded. I admit the danger of that—mere formalism. But it's worth the danger, if you believe in the missionary spirit."

" But do you get the more spiritual people, or do you only influence the low average ? "

"The answer to that is," said Willoughby, "that the Catholic religion not only ensures, by rule, that there is a more intense minimum obligation, but it does supply greater opportunity. Look at the system of Retreats. Most Catholics, some time or other, go into retreat, into silence, into actual comradeship with God. That's a terrific opportunity and an influence which other religions don't supply. Or take again the ultimate heights, which the Catholic religion offers, of the Religious Life. They are such heights that you and I shrink at them and are inclined to regard them, at first sight, as impossible. Incidentally they haven't ever proved impossible to those who have been called to them. And the point is this: they *are* heights which the Catholic is constantly called to consider. He's brought into contact with them. His religion embraces them. He may, at any moment, himself be called to them. That's how you must compare one religion with another—by the rule it ensures and by the opportunities it gives."

"And yet you admit that you may get very spiritual people in other religions."

"Of course I admit it. But the causes of

their spirituality are subjective, personal. The Catholic religion on the other hand, has, in addition, a peculiarly objective influence."

Willoughby paused for a moment.

"Look here," he said. "Wouldn't it mean a bigger step to you to become a Catholic than to become a Wesleyan—or, if you weren't one already, a moderate 'C. of E.' man? Ask yourself that conscientiously."

"Yes, it would," said David. "I admit that."

"Then point the moral to yourself. Which is most likely to be near the truest Christianity, a religion which makes such demands that it takes a big step to belong to it, or one that is easier to join?"

David was silent.

II

"There's one other thing I want to talk about," Willoughby said presently. "I want to talk about what I should call the sectarian spirit."

"This is what I mean by the sectarian

spirit : I am afraid I may have given the impression, by insisting on the inequality of religions, and by comparing the Catholic religion favourably with other religions, that I was adopting an intolerant attitude. I want very fully to dissociate myself from that.

"I want to make this clear. I feel certain that if you are sure of the Catholic religion, if you have built on a certain Catholic basis—if you've adopted the full Catholic position—you can begin to take a broader and wider view about other religions and about religious problems generally.

"It may sound like a contradiction. But it isn't a contradiction. To many people what they would call the extreme Anglo-Catholic position is a narrow creed which involves people who accept it in a controversial, bitter attitude. The exact opposite I maintain to be the case. I wonder whether you follow what I'm driving at."

David looked up. He had become exceptionally silent. "I understand what you're saying," he answered.

"Then I want to show you why I say it. It is because, when one's position is indefinite,

one's energy is largely absorbed in trying to maintain and justify it. So that you get this inevitable and ironical contradiction: the man who is anxious to be so broad and tolerant that he refuses to accept a dogmatic standard, or waters down that dogmatic standard so as to include as large a number of people as possible, is forced to use a good deal of his energy in justifying his position, or in comparing his position with other people's. The man who has a definite dogmatic allegiance has settled all that, and therefore he can save his energy for much wider purposes and can afford a much more generous outlook. The Broad Churchman and the Modernist, and the sort of humanitarian Anglican who derides the 'ecclesiastical layman' and the petty clericalism of the Anglo-Catholics—that type of man is the very person who is concerned largely with the details whose pettiness he deplores. The Dean of St. Paul's is continually introducing into his newspaper articles gibes at the Roman Catholics—he obviously has an anti-Roman complex. The Anglican clergymen who talk about social reform are always thinking about ritualism and super-

stitutions, in order to despise them. The Modernist has to take up so much of his time in apologizing for himself and criticizing the obscurantists, that he has no time left for modern research. There is no one so clerical as the hearty, lay-minded Anglican clergyman, and, to take an extreme instance, none of my friends are so bitterly and mediævally intolerant as those who are so undogmatic that they reject all religious adherence : all their attention is turned to dogmatic channels in order to show why they don't accept dogma. They are chained to the very thing which they want to obliterate. I'm constantly meeting that characteristic.

" And it works out in other ways. A large-minded, kindly-hearted Anglican Bishop feels only disgust for the wastage of time and thought on petty party controversies. He yearns for his diocese to forget such comparative trifles and get to grips with sin and vice, and the evils which really matter. So, to get this working agreement, this armistice of party, he says to the Anglo-Catholics : ' Look here, you fellows, be large-minded and drop the festival of Corpus Christi and

Devotions to the Blessed Sacrament.' The moment he has done so he has forced the attention of the whole diocese on to these things ; they have become the pivot of violent controversy. He, for all his good intentions, has caused it. If these things from a controversial standpoint are really unimportant, then the true attitude to take would be to say, 'Look here, you fellows, I'm too large-minded to ask you to drop the festival of Corpus Christi or Devotions ; they are such small details from my point of view, that there is no need to stop them.'

" Our Anglo-Catholic Movement has been through its controversial stage, precisely because it wasn't sure of its ground, and it had to fight on the ground which its enemies chose for it. But it is emerging from that. A new generation are growing up who don't know what it is to be self-conscious about their religion ; it's natural to them, not acquired. For them and for the Movement of their day, especially to the matured Catholic position, the things which the large-minded people are worrying and apologizing about, are settled. Because a man is sure that his religion is the most

true, he can freely regard other religions as partially true. He can enlarge on their truths much more than on their denials. He needn't be controversial, because he has made up his mind on those issues.

"And, though because I have been trying to explain to you our position, and because you admittedly did not understand it, I have found myself involved largely in criticisms, unfriendly criticisms, of other religions, I want you to be assured that I deplore that mental attitude. I find that because I'm a convinced Catholic, I can look on with more sympathy than I could ever otherwise extend to other Christian efforts, to Nonconformist achievements, to the purity of life and motive of many a moderate Anglican clergyman. I can go out into the world, keen, because of my beliefs, to do my little share towards solving the big business of the world's problems. A Catholic has a unique opportunity to be less controversial, less clerically-minded, less in a groove, than any other type of man. We have our little-minded people who gloat over uncharitable shop-talk, who are engulfed in the muddy shallows of life—I'm not going to pretend

that we haven't. But there's one thing I've noticed—they are usually recent converts.

"I wanted to be sure our talks did not end before I had said this one thing. I wanted you to know that no man can be a true Catholic whose heart does not burn with a love of Christ towards all those who differ from him and those who attack. It is because he knows that it was Christ who called him to be a Catholic, that he is not impatient or irritated because such a call has not come to his friend.

"I think it is the same influence at work which always seems to lend a pietistic tone to Anglican or Protestant appeals. The other day I was staying with some very good-hearted friends, who are warm supporters of what you aptly call the 'C. of E.' There was another visitor, a young man who didn't want to go to church on the next morning, which was a Sunday. They urged him to go quite pleasantly and politely, but obviously they felt it their duty to drag him to church. A Catholic would never have raised the question with him. When he knew the young man was not a Catholic, he would know that there was no

need to plead with him. That would be God's business, not his.

"It's a small incident. But there's a certain moral between the difference of the two attitudes."

III

David roused himself from his apparent reflections.

"I want to get back," he said, "to an old point. I want to know how to deal with Stanson. I want to know how all these ideas really fit in with loyalty to the C. of E."

"We keep on drifting away from Stanson. I don't know him, of course. I only hope he's got tact and common sense. If he hasn't, you ought to supply those qualities for him. The great asset of the Movement is that it is a movement, that it is, in fact, a very gradual process of realizing the Catholic Faith, person by person, parish by parish. There must essentially be parishes where the progress must be gradual and the stages elementary. There must be degrees, and there must be different needs and different policies required for differ-

ent places and persons. This isn't a 'jesuitical' scheme as it may sound : we are perfectly open about our aims. It is only that the question of tact largely enters in."

"I thought you disagreed with the idea of degrees, of extremes anyhow," remarked David. "You said there weren't any."

"Not in the sense that the Catholic Faith is a kind of store from which you may take either a moderate percentage or an extreme percentage, according to your tastes. Take a Beethoven sonata as a simile : you may not have learned quite to play the whole sonata yet, or your particular audience may not have learned to enjoy it throughout. You are perfectly justified therefore, in that particular place, in playing one or two movements only. It's your duty, under those peculiar conditions so to limit it. That is the position of the Anglo-Catholic Movement. But that is a very different thing from saying that the first movement is the whole sonata, or the normal amount of the sonata, and that the other movements are extras, which you pick and choose at whim, according to whether you like extremes or selections. In the same way there is only

one normal Catholic standard, and that is the full Catholic Faith and worship, for us in the West, as we have it in the West, in the Church on the Continent, with the condition about the dissent of the Eastern Church which I have already suggested.

“It is the failure to understand this about which I wrote to you. I told you, you will remember, of the people who thought certain services and practices were ‘extreme,’ because evidently they conceived of the Catholic religion as a kind of stores where you buy so much or so little, as you wish. And Anglican Bishops, too, have much the same ideas when they want to stop Benediction, or Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday, as public services. They don’t say, ‘These are part of the Catholic devotion, but in your particular parish it will be wiser to wait a little till you develop such things.’ They think evidently that fifty per cent. of what the rest of the Catholic Church practises alone constitutes normal Catholicism, and that it is abnormal and extreme to go beyond that. That is entirely foreign to Catholic principles.

“So that we get back to the answer to your

chief question : does this idea fit in with the C. of E ? Well, you must ask yourself if the C. of E. has really, actually, the right to be an inherent member of the Catholic Church. You ask yourself that first. If she has, then it is obviously her duty to progress, and recover, if she has lost any part of it, the whole of the Catholic religion, and nothing less than the whole. What is the whole ? If you believe in the test of authority, and of the corporate mind and consciousness of the Church, you look to what the whole Church believes and practises. You include in this the Eastern and the Roman Catholic Churches, because you believe that both of them make up the Catholic Church. You find them disunited, so that you have to construct a working rule. You are geographically Western, and your Church was Western long after the break between East and West, so that primarily you follow the West. But you cannot ignore the East, and your rule is therefore not actually to insist on anything which the East has actively dissented from. It is only a working rule, because the disunity is abnormal. But you follow it because you believe the Spirit

has not ceased to work in the Church, even in spite of schisms, and so you are not tied down to an antiquarian authority of certain past centuries. If the Church is still alive, her authority and her development must be a living and present, as well as a traditional authority. It isn't an absolute rule. For instance, Anglicans are so Western and Roman that they haven't applied this principle so far as the Filioque Clause in the Creed is concerned.

"We don't claim to share in the devotional developments of the West because they appeal to our taste like pretty ornaments. We claim the right because we believe that it is our duty to the Catholic Church to join ourselves to the mind and the body of conscious witness of the Church. If we don't share, we cut ourselves off still further from the rest of the Church. If the Church of England is more than a Protestant sect, it is her duty to share in the living growth of the rest of the Church as nearly as if no divisions had occurred.

"Our attitude to Anglican authority must be determined by that principle. Do you remember my simile of Berkshire setting up a

separate government from England? Well, let's take that analogy. Our position is that of people who accept the fact that the Berkshire Government is legitimate, though we regard it as abnormal and the breach with England deplorable. We seek to obey the Berkshire law, and we do so except when it clashes with English law, in which case it must give way. In the same manner we obey Berkshire officials except when they are acting against English law.

"A good example of this principle may be taken regarding the Service of Benediction or Devotions to the Blessed Sacrament. A Catholic Bishop has the right, not to decide whether the Blessed Sacrament shall or shall not be reserved, but whether or not Benediction shall be permitted in a particular church or chapel. He can regulate, in fact. Most Anglican Bishops allow Reservation, but they forbid Devotions, and on Catholic principles this power to forbid comes within their powers. Are they to be obeyed if they forbid Devotions? Obviously they would have the right if the position were normal and they were acting normally. Obviously they would

have the right, if the letter of the law were to be followed. But a Catholic Bishop only has that power because in one or two highly exceptional cases there may be some special local reason why such devotions should not be followed. It is like the power of the marriage registrar to grant or refuse a licence ; if he started to refuse all licences on the ground that he disagreed with marriage, he would have to be disobeyed. Or, suppose that in England a permission had to be obtained from the sheriff before the Union Jack could be flown over a building : if Berkshire separated off, the Berkshire sheriff might say, ' I have the power, as a sheriff, to forbid you to fly that flag. I shall forbid it because I don't consider the Union Jack is loyal to the Republic of Berkshire.' The position regarding Anglican Bishops is just the same."

" It all sounds rather bolshy," said David.

" It all sounds rather bolshy, because the position from our point of view is rather bolshy. If the Church of England has any claim to be part of the Catholic Church, then she must be as free to practise the whole Catholic religion as the Church of France or

Belgium. And the whole Catholic religion, as I understand it, can only be that religion which is in use in the Church, particularly the Western Church."

"Then you do really want the English Church to be Roman Catholic in practice."

"Do let's nail that fallacy to the door-post," cried Willoughby. "Let's flatten it out once for all. If the whole of the English Church were to adopt in every detail the Roman Catholic form of worship and devotions, to say Mass in Latin, to forbid Communion in both kinds to the laity, to commence the system of indulgences, to do all kinds of things which it is unlikely will ever be done, so that the two Churches were alike in every external detail, the English Church would not be one degree more Roman Catholic than she is now. Remember that ; it is of supreme importance."

"The difference between us is not a difference of practice or doctrine. It is a difference of one fundamental issue, a difference of the doctrine of Church government, the difference between autocracy and constitutionalism. People do not seem able to appreciate that fact."

"Well, you've been quite clear on it."

"My word, it's getting late," said Wiloughby.

IV

"Oh, it's early enough," David answered. "Besides, it's our last talk. We mustn't end off half way. Do you apply that principle of being free to adopt all that the Roman Catholic Church observes, except in that one particular?"

"Being free to adopt, not being bound to adopt."

"Why do you make that one great exception? Why is the Papal claim so different from the other things?"

"Well, it's the great issue on which the East protests. It is a great issue, really the single issue."

"But, even on that, you don't give an absolute denial."

"We are so keen on the reunion of Christendom that we shouldn't want, in any case, to take up an absolute, *non possumus* attitude."

Besides the 1870 dogma has yet to be more fully defined and more carefully and unprejudicially to be examined."

"Do you apply that principle to the celibacy of the clergy, for instance? A lot of your priests marry, don't they?"

"You must remember what I said about a movement." Willoughby answered. "We are not a complete, finished system. We have to explore our position gradually. I believe myself that we shall gradually find the celibacy rule to be a regular Western development and a necessary one. It's true our clergy do marry, and so long as that happens I feel we shall retain, to some extent, a rather amateur status. But I should be all against a prussianized policy, against making any concrete rules first and securing uniformity afterwards. If the English Church, or this Movement of ours, is an entity, she has a mind and she must gradually by experience and prayer and divine guidance make up her mind. The rules must come after the decision, not the decision as a result of the rule."

"And indulgences—do you say the same about them?"

"Yes—that we must be free to make up our mind. Personally I don't think the English mind is likely to take to the system of indulgences. But it must be free."

"Isn't this all rather indefinite?"

"You mean there's an absence of rule, that Anglo-Catholicism isn't an 'ism,' with a clear-cut, crystallized standard? Certainly. If it had, it would cease to be a movement. There would be no future and no promise left in it."

David reflected.

"We ought to turn in," said Willoughby. "At least I must. So I only leave with you this last idea. Truth comes by movements, or, as I've expressed it, by the slowly unfolding consciousness of the whole body. That's the way any truth comes in human history. That, even in the Roman Catholic Church, is the way dogma and discipline have formed. The Roman Church has only, almost reluctantly, promulgated official decisions, and only after gradual experience and examination. You couldn't believe in Christianity if it were otherwise. Authority is credible because it has this halting human side, this imperfect form,

besides the direct spiritual inspiration. Isn't that so ? ”

“ Yes, I agree with you,” said David.

And on that, they went to bed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNFINISHED FINALE

I

IF this had been a novel, especially of the romantic character, I suppose that the inevitable climax of the last chapter would take shape in David's conversion. I said as much to Willoughby, when I saw him a few months later and talked to him about David and his future.

"There can be no formal conversions from Anglicanism to Anglo-Catholicism," said Willoughby. "How I hate both those misleading terms !"

"Is that an advantage ?"

"A tremendous advantage." Willoughby looked out, far over the house-tops and the chimneys and the gloom of Slumland. "I see in David," he continued, "the Englishman who thinks and cares, who's such a priceless fellow, so magnificently worth winning,

because he's not likely to succumb to an outburst of emotional religious fervour or an orgy of enthusiasm. It's not the type which produces saints, though it has produced martyrs. And I'm not saying it's the only type, or even the best type. But I admire it—it is so cautious, steady, clean, fair. It's what the post-War world so badly wants, and the Church wants particularly."

I felt that comments were not needed.

"The Englishman has still such an essential contribution to make," Willoughby continued. "David had his religion taken from him. He's had centuries of a sectarian, ultra-nationalist, insular experience. He must come back slowly, it's so vital that he should be thorough and come back slowly. How entirely I hope that well-meaning Bishops and controversial clergymen won't force him into a crisis and a series of violent decisions! From a Catholic standpoint, he's got to grow up. And growth is a divine gift, not a human invention."

"Does he still write to you, or see you?"

"Oh, yes, but we don't talk religion. We've talked that—that part is finished. He's just got to feel his way."

"And his parish priest?"

"Oh, not inspired with immense common-sense, you know. Rather an unimaginative mind, and dreadfully conscientious. But they're getting on all right. David understands."

"And have they introduced a great many new things? Have they entered the ritualistic stage?"

"Oh no, thank heavens, not that. Stanson has slowed down. It's ever so much better. I saw him, you know, afterwards. I talked straight to him. He has no sense of humour, but he was very kind and patient with me. I begged him to see that the Catholic religion must come, especially in the villages, through a Low Church setting, and not with High Church drapery. It's unfortunate our immediate ancestors were High Church. If we had evolved out of the Evangelicals, I think we should have got so much further. But we can't help that now. I only tried to make Stanson see the possibility of Catholicism in a simple, bare, Evangelical setting. 'Try to be so "extreme" that you're absolutely homely and simple,' I said. That's the ideal."

"And will he carry out that idea?"

"I wish," said Willoughby, "he had more sense of humour. I begin to believe that is almost the greatest of God's gifts."

II

"Our people must have a sense of humour if we are to win England," Willoughby remarked, presently. "It's the well-meaning Stansons who may let us down. I tried to create a sense of humour in him, but the thing can't be done. I failed ignominiously. He merely thought me irreverent."

Willoughby got up and stood facing the window.

"Yes, that's all very well," I exclaimed. "I quite agree humour is a pleasant lubrication to help things along. But don't you think you lay almost too much emphasis on its importance?"

"I'm sure I don't."

"Then I'm afraid I don't understand you. Why do you say we can't convert England unless our people preserve a sense of humour? I can't see that it is an essential condition."

"It's absolutely essential. If you haven't

got a sense of humour you must either become a Rationalist, or you will Papalize the Church of England as a hide-bound, cast-iron system. You'll be so logical that you'll press everything to its logical conclusion. You'll kill the spirit by creating a letter and insisting on it. We must be large-minded enough to rejoice in our present stage of inconsistencies and resistances. We must stop them crystallizing Anglo-Catholicism into a smug, precise little religion all on its own. But you can only stop them if you can teach them to have a sense of humour. If our people don't preserve that sense, or the people get into power among us who haven't got it, then they'll agree to be dragooned, or they'll dragoon you and me into a brand-new issue which they will forge in a realm of definition. That's the danger of the Stanson type. However, it won't come to that. Humour will prevail."

I maintained a doubtful silence.

"I make them a present of the obvious rejoinder. People who don't understand humour will always think that we want to maintain the Catholic Movement as a joke. They'll think we aren't sincere. They'll think

we want to be illogical, that we admit we're not logical. You don't believe that. You must understand what I mean. You do, I'm sure, though you won't say so. We are so sure of our Movement that we are content to let it move. We don't want it cramped. We won't let them swamp us with a want of patience, we won't give in and let the English Church become a delphic oracle. We can't if we preserve that gift of humour. We must go on growing and living and moving. Some of the Prayer Book revisionists are people who want to forge chains in order to bind themselves in a prison of stagnation. But we must go on freely with faith in the Holy Spirit who is guiding us. That's what I mean. When they ask me what Anglo-Catholicism is, I want to tell them that there isn't such a thing as Anglo-Catholicism. . . .

"There isn't such a thing. It is only the religious spirit and instinct of Englishmen feeling its way, in its own way, by sure degrees on to the fulness of the Divine revelation. It's a sick man beginning to get well. Let him get out and walk about gradually and get well. Don't tell him that the diet he now has to eat has got to be his food for all time. Don't

pretend his convalescent routine is to be the programme for all the remainder of his days. Don't be afraid of ultimate developments and tendencies and all that sort of thing. Have some faith in the Holy Spirit. For God's sake let us deliver ourselves from any fresh Acts of Uniformity. Uniformity! We are not ripe for the stage of uniformity—and we have outgrown Acts of Parliament."

Willoughby turned round from the window.

"And we must have humour if we're to have a big enough imagination for such faith," he said. "We must have humour."

III

Willoughby wrote to me once after that. But there is only one passage which is relevant. It bears on the same sentiments as those which he expressed in his conversation. But when he wrote he was in a different mood.

"Sacraments are greater than their form," ran one passage. "Religion is bigger than its system. The system is only a concession to our little minds, it only comes to us in form because, otherwise, we could not be understood."

“ I’m so glad David has passed beyond the stage of definitions and explanations. I had to explain ; that stage was inevitable. But he has caught sight at last of the larger country, the spirit of the Sacraments, where there can be no disunity or dispute or controversy.

“ The Catholic religion means that you must fall in love with Christ. In that country no other definition is wanted. It’s a tremendous adventure, our Movement, just because it leads to that country. Just because it is hard to define, because it seems to have its inconsistencies, because you can’t put it into the analysis-bottle, the Catholic religion bears on it the marks of Christ.

“ The sacramental truth is the supreme secret of God’s universe. All life is a sacrament. And a sacrament as you know, dear friend, is not only the outward and visible expression. We do not know the sacraments until we have caught sight of that further country.

“ How empty and platitudinous these words appear ! But you can’t translate into words, mere words. . . .”

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